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ABSTRACT

This issue contains materials, about and for women, which have been produced as part of the United Nations Decade for Women. Included are presentations made at the Asian-South Bureau of Adult Education Conferences and other congresses, conferences, and meetings held to discuss women in developing nations. The first three papers deal with the status and role of women in development; the impact of aid, development, and technological change on the status of women in developing nations; and the failure to take women seriously into account as part of the developmental process. Extracts follow from "Links for the Chain," a report of nonformal education involving women in South Asia. The next paper concerns women's unequal position in economic development. Country reports are provided on nonformal education for, and by, women in Australia; nonformal education for women in Malaysia; women's education in Japan; and aspects of women's lives in Thailand. The South Pacific Commission's monthly news of activities (March, 1983) precedes the final papers on a new international economic order that incorporates women into future developmental strategies. (YLB)

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ASIAN-SOUTH PACIFIC
BUREAU OF
ADULT EDUCATION

Women and Development

CE 038 083

COURIER No. 29

DECEMBER 1983

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INTRODUCTION

We are now nearing the end of the United Nations Decade for Women which was inaugurated at a Conference in Mexico in 1975. Adult educators have been active during the decade and several important advances have been made in furtherance of the aims of the Decade. The International Council for Adult Education created a special program for women and at present there are coordinators in all regions of the world. As part of this program ICAE, in association with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Seva Mandir, India, held a meeting in Udaipur in 1981. This meeting provided an opportunity for the coordinators to meet and discuss their progress and plans. A book entitled "Links for the Chain" was produced by Ginny Shrivastava, Preeti Oza and Neena Madan as part of the resource material for the Program. The book brought together a wealth of material from several countries in South Asia about what women are doing, what governments are doing and what gaps there are to be filled. With kind permission of the authors we have included some extracts from that book in this Courier.

ASPBAE's Region 3 Conference in 1982 was on the theme of "Nonformal Education for Women". Region 3 country members presented papers on this theme and these have been published by the conference organizers, edited by Professor Moro'oka. Copies of the full Proceedings are available from the Secretariat. We have used extracts from several of the papers in this issue.

One of the greatest achievements of the UN Decade for Women has been the forging of links between women in all parts of the world through international, national and local organizations. It was realized very early that success would only be possible if women joined together to fight for their rightful place in the world.

To quote from a book produced by the ICAE Women's Program - "Women Hold Up Half of the Sky":

> *Women hold up half the sky, states a Chinese saying. But a closer look shows they also bear significantly more than half the burden of under-development. Not only do women share equally with men the exploitation, dependency and inequalities that result from poverty and powerlessness; they also suffer from cultural biases and attitudes that define what women are 'suited' to do, that restrict their true participation in social, political and economic life, and that fail to recognize or value the strengths, experiences and creativity of half the world's population.*

The Decade will conclude with a conference in 1985. No date or venue has yet been decided. The News Section of this Courier (p.8) contains some further information about what this Conference will hope to achieve.

The Women's Network of the International Council for Adult Education has now commenced a Newsletter which will keep adult educators in touch with one another. Page 2 of the Learning Exchange Section has information about the Newsletter which should prove to be very useful. ASPBAE members are urged to contribute to it in any way they can.

We hope that this Courier will form a useful part of the material about and for women which has been produced as part of the UN Decade for Women.

(Yvonne Heslop)

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NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER: WHAT DOES DEVELOPMENT REALLY MEAN TO WOMEN? 49

Lucille M. Mair

STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Manae Kubota
For 1982 Conference of Asian-
South Pacific Bureau of
Adult Education
11 October 1982

I feel greatly honoured to be given the opportunity of addressing the 1982 Region 3 conference of ASPBAE.

In 1975, the International Women's Year, a World Conference was held in Mexico City which adopted the World Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. The Principles and objectives proclaimed for the Decade - equality of women with men in all fields of life and their contribution to national development and to the cause of peace - are still relevant today in the seventh year of the Decade constituting the basis for action.

The review and appraisal of progress achieved so far indicated that the integration of women into development has been formally accepted by most Governments as a desirable planning objective. Many countries have made efforts, undertaken a number of activities and measures and established institutional and administrative mechanisms to integrate women in developmental efforts.

One of the most positive developments is the increased attention and interest which the condition and role of women in economic, social and political life has generated in research and analysis. Ironically, this development had made it possible to describe in a more scientific manner just how serious the subordination of women is in most countries of the world.

The Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade adopted at the second World Conference in Copenhagen in 1980 has portrayed the present profile of women in a simple sentence that "while women represent 50 percent of the world population and one third of the official labour force, they perform nearly two thirds of all working hours, receive only one tenth of the world income and own less than 1 percent of world property."

Is the profile of women very different in our countries? Our region - Region 3 for the present meeting which covers many countries in eastern and south-eastern Asia is said to be the fastest growing

area in the world. It is also said that in some countries of this region the status of women is comparatively high and the role played by women in national development is great.

In every region of the world women, in fact, play quite a substantial role in economic and social development of the society. There is , however, a certain common feature relevant to the contribution of women worldwide - women tend to be invisible.

World wide, women's domestic and child-rearing activities are generally not valued for national income accounting. Moreover, their contribution to subsistence agriculture and family trades as unpaid family workers are not separately or adequately accounted for. For example, in many countries, although women represent some 70 per cent of the agriculture labour force, statistics on economic activities classify a large portion of women as "non-active" population.

Failure to recognize the economic contribution of women implies failure to consider the factors affecting their contribution, the ways in which they are prepared for their tasks, the tools and techniques they use, and the effectiveness of their efforts. The support by society, which women may need, is also ignored, as is the question of whether they control the proceeds of, or reward from their efforts. What then is the result?

In some developing countries it has led to the shortage of food for domestic consumption, due to the priority and accompanied inputs being given to cash crops for export to developed countries instead of subsistence agriculture performed mostly by women.

Three things are clear from these experiences. One is the apparent imbalance of developmental emphasis between national welfare and the efficiency of monetary income. Another is the close relationship between national welfare and the role and the status of women in development. The third is the constraint placed on women's contributions by the traditional attitude which fails to see the present and future role of women for social progress as well as the need of social support to it.

Focusing on women, it is bound to benefit children, families and the society as a whole. Their struggle for the survival of the family, the community and the nation is deeply ingrained in the basic human needs. Who would be better advocates for such human needs than women?

Regrettably, there are enormous problems in this respect in the present world. According to UN statistics, about two thirds of the population in the developing market economy are seriously poor and 700 millions are destitute. Some 400 to 500 million people

suffer from a severe degree of protein-energy malnutrition of whom half are young children.

Although progress has been made in the improvement of health in general, maternal and child mortality and morbidity are still very high. In many developing countries, the rates of infant mortality count more than ten times of those in developed countries. The most important reason is again malnutrition, often caused by the malnutrition and ill-health of mothers.

Despite the efforts to improve the educational standards, nearly 30 per cent of world population remain illiterate. Among the illiterates 2 out of 3 persons are women, reflecting the severe inequality of women from the past to present. It is widely accepted that training is necessary to develop any skill, professional, technical or otherwise. Yet so many of the girls and women are left out of proper training opportunities because they live in continuous drudgery.

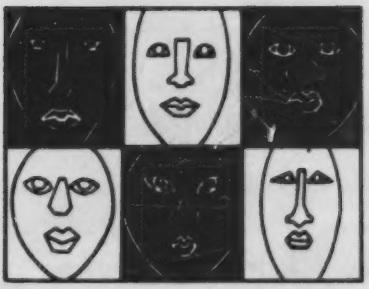
In most countries of the world, both developing and developed, women's participation at the policy-making level is minimal. Their representations in parliamentary membership is generally negligible and so is their representation in the decision-making organs of political parties, professional organizations, labour unions, cooperatives, and any other organization except women's organizations. At the international level, it is only a handful of women at the best who are involved in the consideration of most political issues, questions of disarmament, war and peace, so crucial a matter for every one of us.

In the past, women and children have merely been the objects and victims in these fields. Among the factors limiting the women's active participation are socio-economic attitudes which discourage their participation in public life, lack of education and training, lack of economic independence and the burden of workloads which leave most women little time to devote to these crucial activities.

Effective integration of women in developmental efforts in all fields fields and at all levels is a key to social progress. Effective integration both in terms of quantity and quality is needed. If we are to improve the quality of life of everybody, including that of future generations, the improvement of the condition of women is its pre-requisite.

Education and training - both formal and informal - are among the most important determinants of the effective mobilisation of women in developmental process. This Conference aims at studying and

and identifying ways and means to improve and expand adult education for women in order to develop their great potentiality and thus to prepare them to emerge into a powerful force for change in the society. The items before it call for new and innovative approaches to the future of all citizens. It is a challenge. I wish the Conference every success.



THE IMPACT OF AID, DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Pam Thomas*

It has generally been assumed that the introduction of western technologies, the implementation of development programmes and the direct injection of economic aid into the Third World would bring about modernisation, and with it an increase in the quality of life as well as increased equality between rich and poor nations and the rich and poor within nations. There has also been a commonly held notion that women in the Third World have traditionally been oppressed and that 'development' was the key to changing their situation (Leacock, 1979:131). However, after 150 years of western contact and 20 years of intensive development effort in the Pacific, many of the expected improvements have not eventuated and rather than an increase in the quality and equality of life, the move has often been in the other direction.

The way in which aid and development opportunities are distributed discriminate against most women (Rogers, 1980). Although they may provide increased prestige for a few, for the majority 'development' has brought about a reduction in status and frequently an increased workload. Women's economic autonomy has been replaced by reliance upon and domination by men; their rights to land have diminished and their prestigious manufacturing skills replaced by modern manufactures (Boserup, 1980; Gailey, 1980; Nash, 1977; Roger, 1980).

This discrimination against women in the Third World has been seen as inextricably bound to a world system of exploitation (Leacock, 1978) and to the fact that most economics and development planners responsible for the modernisation of underdeveloped countries have been expatriate, European men. As a direct result of their Eurocentric perceptions of women's roles, they have ignored or failed to realise the contributions that women in the Third World make to the agricultural and economic sectors of their societies (Nash, 19-7; Reay, 1975 Rogers, 1980; Rooney, 1976), leading to a discriminatory situation. This process of discrimination has a long history. It did not begin with development planners or modern aid programmes, but with initial European contact. This contact has throughout history been predominantly male.

In this paper we take an historical perspective and look at the roles and status of women in traditional societies in Africa and the Pacific. We then show how women's prestige, autonomy and

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* The title and some basic ideas for this paper were those of Penelope Schoeffel, Programme Coordinator, Women & Development Network of Australia.

status have been continually eroded by the technological and ideological changes introduced by the missionaries, by colonial administrations and more recently through the direct intervention of aid and development programmes.

Throughout these three often overlapping influences, one technological change in particular has had and continues to have widespread implications for the status of women in the Third World. This has been the introduction of new modes of communication, themselves inherent factors in societal change. New transport networks have increased mobility; literacy brought increased knowledge and possibilities of employment; the mass media made available a wider world-view. Access to these different modes of communication has been largely controlled and exploited by men.

TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

Most anthropological literature suggests that women in almost all societies have been dominated by men and that the oppression of women was physiologically inevitable (Evans-Pritchard, 1965; Leach, 1968; Levi-Strauss 1969). Most anthropologists, however, were men and as much influenced by European value-systems as contemporary development planners. Although in many societies women's roles may have been considered less important than those of men.

> *...the fact is...that women retained great autonomy in much of the pre-colonial world and related to each other and to men through public as well as private procedures, as they carried out their economic and social responsibilities and protected their rights* (Leacock, 1978 1 36)

Anthropological reports notwithstanding, in many Pacific and African pre-contact societies women held high status, clearly defined areas of influence and competence, filling roles which allowed them authority and prestige both within women's sphere of influence and the society at large. In the Pacific, women played an important economic role in village life and in Polynesian and Melanesian societies were responsible for both subsistence food production and for producing manufactured goods which often required a high degree of skill. Products such as mats, baskets, shell money, bark cloth and coconut oil, although frequently used by men to gain political prestige, gave women considerable bargaining power and implicit political influence. Women of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea and West New Guinea provide examples. Among the Kapauku (Pospisil, 1963), the Enga and Chimbu (Meggitt, 1970) women were responsible for raising the pigs which provided the basis for male status and political position. Although in these societies power was overtly male-dominated, women controlled the production of goods upon which this power was based. As a result, 'men cannot be too harsh on their wives because of their economic and domestic dependence upon them' (Hau'ofa, 1981:152).

In the hierarchal societies of Polynesia and Africa women derived clearly defined status from their lineage. In pre-contact Tonga

> *... both chiefly and non-chiefly women had sources of authority and relative autonomy which were not dependent upon personal attributes...because the sister - especially the eldest sister - was ranked superior to her brother. Sister's children outranked brother's children. For chiefly people this ranking involved political and material rights...these rights...included the sister's call on her brother, his household and his descendants and were subsumed under the term 'fahu' meaning 'above the law'* (Gailey, 1980:299)

In Tonga, Samoa and some Papua New Guinean societies women exercised social authority throughout life as sisters or daughters within the lineage. Mekeo women of Papua New Guinea could always rely upon the support of their agnates to coerce their husbands into compliance with their wishes and within their wives' villages men were socially inferior (Hau'ofa, 1981:153). Chiefly women in Tonga and Samoa had political authority within their natal villages, including command over the labour of those women defined as inferior to them. In effect, women had dual status - as wives and daughters. In Samoa, daughters and sisters formed a particular group known as the *aualuma*, with high ceremonial status, responsible for entertaining important visitors and for weaving the highly valued *ie toga* or fine mats. These mats formed the most important part of Samoan ceremonial exchange and unlike *koloa*, the perishable goods produced by men, were of lasting value. A similar situation existed in Tonga. Women produced *koloa* , or valuables, while men produced *ngaue*, or work, which was of much lower prestige than *koloa* (Gailey, 1980). Other highly prestigious and important manufactured items used for exchange were *tapa*, or bark cloth, and coconut oil.

In many West African societies dual-sex institutions gave men and women equal political, legal, economic and religious influence. Each male institution had a female counterpart and each sex managed its own affairs. In this way women's interests were represented at all levels (Okonjo, 1976: 47). The Igbo of Western Nigeria had highly developed dual-sex institutions. Each sex had its own kinship group, age grades, secret and title societies. A leading male, or king had a female counterpart (who was not his wife), and each had a group of councillors. The female council could and did challenge male authority when necessary. In other West African societies there were two distinct groups of women within a village mirroring to a certain extent the Polynesian situation. Among Western Nigerian societies the *umuada*, to which all women belonged should they live in their natal village or not, had great authority.

> *These women acted as political pressure groups in their natal villages in order to achieve desired objectives. They stopped quarrels and prevented wars. So powerful was their reputation that their natal villages had to reckon with them and their possible reaction to every major decision* (Green, 1964 in Okonjo.9176:52)

Women in many African and Pacific societies were able to perform secret rites and sacrifices and frequently women had medical skills and knowledge of herbs and massage. In Fiji, Western Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands older women still gain status from their skills as healers.

The Sukuma women of Tanzania, like women in many pre-contact societies not only helped with men's crops, but specialised in their own vegetables and grains, which although planted on land belonging to their husband's lineage, were considered their own. They could distribute, market or exchange them on their own behalf (Verkevisser, 1973), and derived economic independence from their own production.

Finally, women in Senegal, Upper Guinea and Gambia derived considerable autonomy and status as traders: 'these women had considerable independence of action in their own societies and were strongly attracted by economic opportunities that arose with the coming of Europeans' (Brooks, 1976:22).

It seems obvious that in many pre-contact societies in Africa and the Pacific women had their own spheres of influence, autonomy and prestige. They were concerned not only with the domestic sphere of life but were actively engaged in agriculture, the skilled manufacture of goods and often in trade and exchange. They had independent land rights and could asses their independence and authority through their lineage affiliations. Although seldom considered completely equal to men, they nevertheless had both direct and indirect political and economic influence and status. At the time of contact, it is likely that most African and Pacific women had greater independence, higher status and authority than their European counterparts.

BRINGING THE BIBLE

During the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries penetrated much of Africa and the Pacific. British missionaries brought with them Victorian, middle-class values and their own perceptions of appropriate sex roles. Socialised into their own value-systems and sure of their superiority, it is perhaps not surprising that they did not recognise the status African and Pacific Island women held, or that they felt that agricultural work was degrading for women. As Schoeffel (1977:7) has pointed out, missionaries in Samoa constantly misunderstood female roles and status and although

> *...a note of suprise occasionally intrudes concerning the apparent independence or high status of particular Samoan women, most missionaries remained unshaken in their supposition that in primitive societies the status of women was degraded and that Christianity and the civilizing influence of European culture would in time elevate them to the happy condition of their sisters in Europe.*

The happy condition of their sisters in Europe was of course that they were totally dominated by men both nationally and domestically. It was the era of *pater familias* where women had no rights to their own property once they were married, no vote and no voice in local or national affairs.

> *women were born to become wives and mothers and according to the romantic ideals of Victorian England, to be placed on a pedestal, cherished and shielded from the sordid concerns of the male world (loc. cit.)*

The missionaries came armed not only with their notions of middle-class Victorian Britain, but the Bible. They were certain they were right - the Bible said so.

> *Wives, submit yourselves unto your husband, as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.*
>
> Paul, Ephesians 5:22-23.

Wifely obedience was expected and was incorporated in Christian marriage vows.

The mission redefinition of female agricultural and marital roles disfavoured women. In keeping with mission perceptions of what was feminine, women were urged to take up sewing, embroidery, cooking and other domestic duties. Men were encouraged to engage in agriculture, particularly cash-cropping, which because of its economic importance was automatically assumed to be appropriate only to men. The head of the household was considered to be male and most economic dealings were with men. New technologies introduced by the missionaries helped diminish the status and economic autonomy of women. The use of imported, manufactured cloth was urged as being more 'civilised' and as its use increased in the Pacific, women's economic independence decreased as imported cloth reduced the need for *tapa* and coconut oil. In Tonga the manufacture and wearing of *tapa* was banned in 1875, and although this law was later suspended (Latukefu, 1974), it reflects the attitude of the time. Cloth had to be purchased and in line with mission ideology, men controlled the cash crops and the profits from them.

If women wanted the prestigious new import, they had to depend upon their husbands for it.

In Tonga and Samoa the new copra trade and reduction in the manufacture of cocnut oil also had direct and indirect implications for the status of women.

> *As long as women were engaged in coconut oil extraction...there was no confusion of spheres of exchange...but with intensified copra production however, more pressure was placed on households for male labour, taking men away from domestic tasks. Women then were apt*

to assume mens' work which was ordinarily demeaning. Christian missionaries insisted that women do the cooking and other 'womanly' work even when men were available (Gailey, 1980:309)

With the introduction of copra women had less time for coconut oil production and as a result of the mission dictum that as much of the body as possible be covered there was less demand for it.

A further decline in women's independence resulted from the mission insistence that wives should always be sexually available to their husbands and that polygamy should be banned. In pre-contact societies husbands and wives often lived in separate houses and it was common for there to be a three to four year period of sexual abstinence following the birth of a child. The combination of abstinence, abortion, infanticide and disease helped control population growth and ensured that women were not constantly tied to the demands of infants. In Fiji it is unlikely that women ever bore more than three to four children (Schoeffel and Kikau, 1979:23) and thus had time to engage in occupations other than domestic. The increased emphasis on the role of wives rather than daughters and sisters led to a reduction in women's independent status and autonomy. It also led indirectly to an increase in the birthrate. Missions also banned many of the medical and religious practices through which pre-contact women could gain status and prestige. Traditional medicines and magic were replaced by patent western cures and traditional medical skills by the ministrations of mission wives who probably had considerably less medical experience and certainly less knowledge of local complaints and cures than the women whose place they were taking.

But the technology that was to have perhaps the most far-reaching implications for the status of women in the Third World was the introduction of the written word, initially in the form of the Bible. Following the European notion that boys should be educated while the girl's place was in the home 'women were excluded from education' (Rogers, 1980:39). With the introduction of education a new elite was in the making. This elite was almost entirely male.

COLONISATION

The process of discrimination against women begun unwittingly by the missionaries gathered momentum during the colonial era. Colonial administrations ensured male domination and the changes introduced together with bureaucratic superstructures reflected European male values. All institutions initiated during the colonial regimes - legal, educational, religious, military, medical and political were male-dominated and based on European perceptions and models, as were private enterprise. Colonial administrators relied for local information and political support upon indigenous men, thereby expanding and enhancing their positions. This had direct repercussions on the positions of women. "Male hierarchies were used for direct and indirect forms of colonial rule, while

female hierarchies atrophied or were actively suppressed' (Rogers, 1980:36). Male domination in British colonies was not merely a matter of choice but backed by law. An Order of Council passed in 1921 'reserved to men any branch of, or posts in, the Civil Service in any of His Majesty's possessions overseas or in any foreign country...' (op.cit.:36).

In keeping with European male values, new agricultural techniques, new seeds and new tools were introduced to men rather than women. Tractors or ploughs brought about easier and quicker preparation of larger areas of land, and 'the work traditionally performed by women, such as weeding and transplanting therefore increased overproportionately' (Colombo-Sacco and Lopez-Morales, 1975:20). African statistics show that in a sample of traditional villages women performed 55% of the agricultural work while in modernised villages this rose to 68% (op.cit.:20). As a result of new technologies women either lost their independent agricultural role and had to concern themselves solely with producing food for the family; were pushed out of agriculture altogether or had their work-loads expanded.

During the colonial era many Third World women lost their independent access to land as family or clan holdings were sold or leased to expatriates. Legal transfers, when sought, were made with men, ignoring the fact that in traditional societies women often also had rights to land and powers of decision-making regarding land. In Western Samoa payment for land and leases, together with payments for cash crops legally went to the male head of the extended family (Holmes, 1971) and although cash-crop payments can now be made to other family members, land and lease-hold payments are still made to the *matai*, or head of the family. In many colonies where the whole family is engaged in cash-cropping or in plantation labour, payment was made to the male head of the household. This assumption that men controlled family land and finances robbed many women of their economic autonomy.

The expansion of transport networks and the growth of public and private enterprise during the colonial era brought about increased employment opportunities and mobility for men. It was men who left home to work in towns or on plantations, and it was men who migrated, leaving their families in the village where the ratio of productive members of society dropped, leaving young, able-bodied women to not only continue their own roles but their husband's food production as well. The Kenyan census shows that by 1969 525,000 rural families were headed by women (Colombo-Sacco and Lopez-Morales,1975:29). As men increased their knowledge, experience and economic status outside the village environment, women remained trapped in the rural area and fell behind economically and educationally.

> *While illiteracy, traditional behaviour and superstition had once been common amongst all villagers, these signs of 'backwardness' gradually became the characteristics of women* (Boismenu, in Lechte 1978).

Following the mission model, colonists in both Africa and the Pacific educated, trained and employed only men. As Leckie (1978: 158) points out 'men were seen to be at the progressive end of the development process, women at the traditional end...in the early colonial years this was emphasised everywhere in the Pacific by sending boys to school'. As men were trained in western educational modes and imbued through their education with western values it is perhaps not surprising to find that

> *much of the ideology of male supremacy is apparently passed on intact from western men to their local counterparts. The educated elite - with some outstanding exceptions - are often much more hostile to women than are uneducated men* (Rogers, 1980:35)

By the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the first 'development decade', many Third World women's roles had become increasingly domesticated. In some countries women had legally lost their rights to land and to whatever economic and political independence they had once held. In other, traditional manufacturing skills had been lost or downgraded. In almost all women had been discriminated against educationally. However, in more isolated areas and in rural villages where the 'benefits' bestowed by missionaries and colonial administrators had not penetrated or had been resisted, women still had access to some degree of status or autonomy. The implementation of rural development plans was to bring these wome into the mainstream of male hegemony.

THE DEVELOPMENT ERA

With the emergence of the independent Third World nations there was a move in Europe and America to assist in their social and economic development. The direction development was to take and its perceived objectives were European, male constructs and there was the underlying notion that development and modernisation, *per se*, were good and would be beneficial to all Third World peoples. Development thinking today emphasises rural development and millions of dollars are spent annually in African and Pacific nations on village-level agricultural projects. Australia alone will contribute sixty million dollars annually over the next five years to Pacific nations and at present is responsible for funding cocoa, banana and small crop programmes in Western Samoa, rice, beef and cocoa projects in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. The development plans outlining these projects are almost without exception the work of male expatriate planners on short-term contracts and assisted by educated urban-based indigenes. Expatriate planners seldom have time to acquire a wide knowledge of the social, political, economic or agricultural systems of the societies for whom they are planning, let alone the values, and role-perceptions of women, or the exact role women play. Indigenous planners themselves are often out of touch with the rural situation and as their education has often taken place outside their home country they tend to see development through the prism of their own international experience. As a result women's roles and their actual economic production is often over-looked and their unpaid contribution to

development projects seldom costed. There is therefore an unrealistic view of the actual input of development projects and as plans continue to be based on inaccurate costings women are unwittingly relegated to the role of unpaid labourers.

The importance of the economic input women can afford development, and the lack of planning recognition of this is clearly shown in Western Samoa. Village Women's Committees set up in the 1920s by the New Zealand administration to help improve child and maternal health are responsible today for village sanitation and hygiene, for the maintenance and supervision of community facilities, including the district hospitals, the village well and bathing pool(Schoeffel, 1977:18); for installing water-sealed latrines, electric generators, for maintaining schools and school grounds and for running an increasing number of agricultural projects. As Schoeffel (1979) has stated, the village Women's Committees are 'the backbone of the rural health service' and save the government millions of dollars every year by providing services to the community for which they are not paid. But government and development planners when they wish to discuss village development, speak only to men. Although women's agricultural input is now recognised, government and aid agencies appear to be aware only of women's 'ideal', rather than actual roles. This can be seen in the way in which developmental information is channelled. Agricultural information and assistance is channelled only to men, while information considered 'domestic' (family planning and nutrition) is channelled only to women (Thomas, 1982). In reality, women are deeply involved in agricultural production, men do a lot of the cooking and are as much at nutritional risk as women and children, and men have at least something to do with the birth rate.

Consideration is seldom given to the long-term social and environmental effects of development projects and in particular to the effects they might have on the roles and position of women.

The increased production of cocoa outlined in the eighth Fijian Development Plan provides a good example of how current development projects can have unintended long-term social and economic implications for Third World women. This example can be mirrored in many Pacific and African countries. In the current five-year development plan period (1980-1984) the Fijian Government is to spend a further ten million dollars on increasing cocoa production (Central Planning Office, 1980). Intensive planting began in 1977 and initially centred around the Wainibuka Valley, in the south east of Viti Levu, the major island in the Fijian group.

Until recently indigenous Fijian men and women were both involved in agriculture. Men were responsible for clearing forest and for producing staple root crops while women weeded and harvested and grew supplementary vegetables. Women were also responsible for for mat-weaving, basket-making and fishing and in the Wainibuka

villages grew vegetables which they marketed. The fertile alluvial soil surrounding the villages was in constant use for food production and the steep, less fertile slopes behind the villages for shifting cultivation. Lineage land was available to all and its distribution was the responsibility of the head of the matagali, or clan.

When cocoa was introduced the Department of Agriculture extension oficers suggested it be planted in secondary forest on the slopes behind the villages. However, most was planted on the alluvial soil. As cocoa was an important and high-income cash crop its production was the prerogative of men, in particular the village *matagali* leaders who assumed individual rights to both the alluvial land and the bulk of the cocoa crop. Other village men planted smaller plots of cocoa on the lower slopes near the village and some villages also planted additional communal plots. Although cocoa is a low-maintenance crop requiring very little labour except at harvesting, it now takes up all village men's time. As they no longer engage in food production and the return from cocoa is insufficient to support both men's status and the family, women have had to take on the men's previous role of staple food production. As the high quality land near the village is used for cocoa women have to walk increasing distances to their garden plots which are on poor quality soil on steep slopes. As this land is quickly degraded new plots have to be dug at regular intervals at even further distances from the villages. Women are now responsible not only for the heavy digging and clearing but carrying heavy loads of food back to the village. Where distances have become too great there is a tendency to continue using degraded land nearer the villages. This land will now support only cassava (*manihot esculenta*), a root crop of very low nutritional value (Thaman and Thomas, 1981). Nutritional standards in these villages have declined as a direct result (Thomas, 1982).

In association with cocoa plantations, seven villages in the valley now have cocoa fermentaries and driers. These operate on firewood, putting cocoa, or men's work in direct competition to cooking, or women's work, for an increasingly scarce resource. Men have access to chainsaws and trucks to collect firewood, while women do not. In 1981, women and children were walking nearly a mile each day to collect and carry home firewood (Thomas, 1982).

In the past, women's time in the Wainibuka valley was divided between subsistence food production, food for marketing and skilled manufactures. It is now spent on subsistence food growing that has no direct economic return. In addition they are expected to pick and pod cocoa during harvest-time. The large-scale introduction of cocoa into the Wainibuka Valley has not only changed the position and status of women, but is in the process of altering the structure of society as *matagali* increasingly take over individual rights to the best land. It is also very likely that serious environmental damage could result.

As Colombo-Sacco and Lopez-Morales (1975:11) point out, women are now

> *...relegated to what is called subsistence agriculture which has the honourable task of providing food for the family. But it is a sterile honour. For any modern agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, improved seeds of better implements are mostly channelled into the cash crop sector. Women are being more and more isolated from the path of technological progress and confined to a marginal role which means a loss of status, income and independence.*

In many Pacific and African countries social and economic changes in rural areas together with growth in communication networks have led to widespread urban migration, not only of men looking for employment but of their wives and families. Cut off from their traditional village groupings and support systems, urban women in the Third World are doubly disadvantaged. They no longer have access to land for subsistence food crops, or to the raw materials for manufactures, they do not have sufficient education to gain employment, seldom speak urban languages and often have insufficient knowledge or experience to engage in small business ventures. These women are readily exploited and many multi-national companies are moving their plants to the Third World to take advantages of a large, cheap, unorganised, female labour force.

It seems clear that over the last 150 years the introduction of new technologies, aid and development programmes together with the ideologies that accompany them have done little to help women in the Third World. There are of course exceptions, but on the whole there has been an erosion of women's status, prestige and independence as well as a change in their societal roles. Rather than bringing about equality, new technologies have actively assisted in bringing about inequality. There is today an urgent need for a realistic appraisal of the actual work women do and for future development programmes to adequately take women's needs into consideration. If aid donor countries are genuine in their attempts to increase the quality and equality of life in the Third World countries, they must insist on a more equitable spread of benefits and opportunities. This will require a much deeper understanding of women's actual roles.

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* Proceedings of the Women and Technological Change Conference, Melbourne July/August 1982. Organised by the National Status of Women Committee, United Nations Association of Australia.

WOMEN THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY

Anne K. Bernard*

Women, as the saying goes, hold up half the sky. They also bear significantly more than half the burden of Third World underdevelopment. Not only do they share equally with men the exploitation and dependency that results from poverty and lack of power, but they also suffer because of cultural biases that determine how they should behave. The traditionally narrow definitions of what they are suited to do restrict their participation in political and economic development.

Women's work outside the home is extensive, particularly in agriculture and the informal economy. Yet their contribution to national development remains largely invisible - reflected neither in national statistics nor in extension and training programs. Income-generating programs and wage employment schemes for women typically are organized on the basis of enhancing the family's economic condition. They do not account for the "double day" this creates for the women whose household responsibilities remain unchanged. Even where reform, or revolution, have created greater political or economic equality, the traditional inequalities between men and women at home, in trade unions, and in the community, tend to remain the same.

Nonformal education carried out in the context of development activities could provide women with a powerful tool for redressing these sexual imbalances by bringing women together to assess critically both their problems and their capabilities, and to take action.

During the last decade, adult education programs have multiplied thoughout the Third World. However, little is known about the quality or impact of these programs; about whether women participate and, if they do, who they are. The extent to which women are involved in decision-making about the development, management, or evaluation of the programs has not been determined.

In most countries of the world, the majority of adult education researchers and policymakers are men. It is not surprising then

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that few research projects have dealt with women's needs and potential, and that most of the research done on adult education neglects the role of women in development. Little of the research comes to the attention of planners of adult education programs, nor is it effectively used by them.

Because so little is known and because women engaged in non-formal education seldom have the opportunity to share information and experience, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in Toronto, Canada, launched a project in May 1980 to fill in some of these gaps. Funded by IDRC, the project aimed to clarify the nature of women's participation in nonformal education programs, the extent and quality of these programs, and to determine areas requiring further research and training in order to increase the contribution such education could make to women's development. In addition, it sought to encourage communication among women adult educators.

Because of the worldwide nature of the problem, the study was carried out in seven Third World regions: South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, the South Pacific, and the Arab States. Under the coordination of a women adult educator in each of the regions, information -- both printed and from surveys of practitioners and researchers - was collected. In most regions this was supplemented by individual visits and in some by regional or national meetings. This was the first time that a broadly-based investigation of women in non-formal education had been attempted.

A 15-day workshop and study tour held in Udaipur, India, in November 1981, brought together 16 women from 14 Third World countries and two ICAE project coordinators.

The workshop was funded by the Swedish International Development Authority and coordinated by ICAE and Seva Mandir, a voluntary rural adult education organization. The workshop aimed to disseminate the studies' results and assist in network building by giving project coordinators the opportunity to share with others something of the process and results of their investigations. It also aimed to enable the group to build on these exchanges and formulate recommendations through discussions of their work and priorities.

One of the clearest statements emerging from both the project and the workshop was that there is no simple or single answer to improving the conditions of women who are poor and marginal in their societies. Development is a complex, continuous process. Within each region, and within each country, the particular history, culture, political and economic system

shape both the problems women face and the solutions available to them. Nevertheless, there are common themes.

Perhaps the most fundamental criticism made of nonformal education activities throughout the regions is their failure and the failure of development programs in general, to take women seriously into account as full participants in the development process. Rather than enhancing the integration of women, nonformal education programs too often contribute to their marginalization. They often foster the attitude that a women's capabilities and role options are few, and that her contribution to the society outside the home is basically a supplementary one. The assumption that women are somehow the malfunctioning half of the population persists. Much of non-formal education is focused simply on helping women improve within the limited range of activities to which they are "suited" by virtue of their sex. There appears to be little commitment to increasing the influence of women as a group. Nor are women encouraged to analyze their situation and develop alternatives within a system that typically excludes them from the major decisions affecting their lives.

Programs marginalize women to the extent that they compartmentalize them as homemakers, mother and incidental wage earners, rather than perceiving them as multi-dimensional and multi-talented individuals. They marginalize women too, to the extent that they segregate them from the socio-economic mainstream. For example, small-scale craft programs expose women to the international economy, while at the same time confining them simply to producing the goods. By denying them access to management and marketing skills or to sources of fair credit, such programs serve principally to increase women's dependency and vulnerability.

Programs that confine their "women's" activity to isolated, technical problems in the community, without an examination of the wider system and its implications for development, deny women the opportunity to take part in reshaping that system.

The workshop participants also felt that men must be included in women's development process. It is men's image of women, and women's image of themselves in relation to men, that constitutes a major part of the inequality between them. Programs typically fail to recognize that "women's problems", and their solutions, are not women's alone, but stem from the total community.

Many of the recommendations put forward in the regional reports and during the workshop were specific to the regions themselves.

Common, however, were recommendations for more concerted, coordinated action in terms of women's programs and research on women. There is a need for all governments to formulate more precise, consistent, and integrative policies in support of women's development, and to provide the resources, training and monitoring that will ensure the implementation of those policies. Greater continuity and coordination of research and training efforts in general are needed, particularly through more effective communication among nonformal educators, so that development programs build upon one another. Such coordination would help to ensure that women "are not left in a vacuum after a program is finished, but have somewhere next to go", as one participant put it, and that energy and commitment are not wasted through competition for resources or through duplication.

Research was considered to be an important factor in promoting women's development in all regions. But the participants were concerned that too often research is undertaken at the expense of action, and that the results of research already done are neither disseminated nor applied.

A number of suggestions were made on areas for further research. Most of these call for the improvement of program practice and design. One recurrent recommendation was for more micro-case studies of different women's days - the range of activities performed, the skills displayed, the time needed, and social constraints faced. Ths information could help ensure that programs are more relevant to the actual needs of women. More research is also needed in the area of national statistics of women and their participation in education, in agriculture, and in the wage economy.

Much more imperative than recommendations for new research initiatives, however, were recommendations for a restructuring of the research process itself in order to make it more truly collaborative. Participants called for a shift in focus from one dependency on outside expertise to one of control by the women who are the subjects of the research. Women, particularly at the community level, must be trained to initiate their own research, to write proposals, to secure funding, to manage the process, and to use and disseminate the results. Research on women, completed but lost within the files of a myriad of organizations, needs to be located, summarized, and translated into a language and form that can be used by the grass roots women themselves.

Further action is planned. Several of the coordinators, for example, intend to distribute their reports throughout their regions to stimulate further activities. In Latin America and Africa the project is serving as the basis for building

a women's component into existing nonformal education organizations. And although the Council will not be involved directly in these activities, the ICAE's Women's Program will continue its advocacy and networking role and the Council's General Assembly later this year will include a special Policy Working Group on women.

If the project and workshop brought out the many weaknesses in current nonformal education activities for women, it was also very evident that there are strengths. Chief among these perhaps are the quality of commitment and the perception of the women who participated in the project, women who no doubt represent a much wider population of researchers and practitioners. What they need, however, is an equal commitment on the part of society as a whole. They need a recognition that development efforts that do not explicitly account for women are hypocritical, and can at best be only half successful.

*Paris, November 1982

LINKS FOR THE CHAIN

A report of Nonformal Education Involving Women
in South Asia - Programmes and Problems

Ginny Shrivastava
Preeti Oza
Neena Madan

We include below extracts from "Links for the Chain". We acknowledge with thanks permission to use these extracts by the authors. The book itself is in three parts, Part I contains an introduction, methodology, analysis of: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Problems, Conclusions and Recommendations. Part II lists agencies working in the region, and Part II lists research documents and a select bibliography on Women's Development through Nonformal Education. We are not sure if copies are still available but you could write to Ginny Shrivastava at Seva Mandir, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India if you are interested in having further information.

THE REPORT

The objectives of the research project were:

1. to clarify the extent and quality of participation by women in nonformal education programmes in the seven Third World Regions in order to identify areas where such programmes are or are not effectively meeting the needs of women.

2. to identify topics for research needed in order to plan and implement better programmes for women's development through nonformal education.

3. to strengthen the network of those working in the field of women's development through nonformal education.

The South Asia report, as well as those of 6 other Third World Regions, was the basis for work at an international meeting held in Udaipur, India, in November 1981. The other regions which have participated in this survey research project are:

South America
The Caribbean
Africa
The Arab States
Southeast Asia
The Pacific

The Need for the Study

It was observed that field work organizations were for the most part, self-reliant in respect to planning, implementing, motivating, mobilising resources, and doing follow-up in relation to their work. There was, however, a definite lack in self-evaluation. Regarding systematic research, this was being carried out by organizations other than the field work organizations.

The existing condition then, is that field organizations are experiencing problems, but are not commissioning or doing systematic analysis, hypothesizing, or experimentation in order to find solutions. The research institutes, for the most part,

are not doing research on field problems, of women's development. This notion is supported by Dr Neera Desai. Director of the Women's Research Unit of SNDT Women's University in Bombay. In the foreword to A Select Bibliography on Women in India, published by SNDT in 1977, she writes:

> *The preparation of this bibliography has brought into focus certain trends in the interests of scholars with regard to women's problems. The entries reveal that in the pre-Independence phase, and even for some years after Independence, scholars have exhibited considerable interest in the historical development of the position of women. They have not displayed as much enthusiasm for examining the contemporary position and role of women...Thus, for nearly twenty years after Independence...the studies were either based on historic-analytic approaches or they were empirical studies on the changing institution of marriage, family and caste. It is only during the last eight or ten years that studies on the changing role of women, problems of women, attitudes of women and such other subjects have been attempted...Much of this type of work is confined to the urban, educated middle classes women."*

Even if the rejearch institutes are doing research on field problems, the result of that research is not reaching the field organisations.

It is hoped that this document, Links for the Chain, which lists existing research (which may be of use in guiding future field work) and which lists existing field problems (which hopefully will be HELPFUL in formulating future research studies) and will have made a good beginning in bringing an awareness of the interdependence between the two groups of workers for women's development...field workers and research workers.

Further, the sponsoring organization, the International Development Research Centre, is (IDRC) itself setting a good model for research agencies. Before taking up any research, first ask the field workers what problems they are facing. Then work on such research, the results of which will move the cause of women's development forward--in real action terms: IDRC's stance is appreciated.

Scope and Nature of the Work

An enlightenment that emerged as the study progressed was that many many efforts, many more than were expected, are being made and developed for work with women. Further, considerable ground has been covered since the time it was believed that women were secondary citizens, generally less capable

and with more limited abilities than men, and who required welfare-oriented schemes to cover-up the damages to them through the onslaught of thoughtless development process.

Now, finally, critical issues have been identified in four countries of the Region (of Pakistan, unfortunately nothing can be said), and efforts are being made to convey these to all concerned in government and non-government programmes. These critical issues are:

a) a need to consider women's contribution to various sectors of the economy and the labour force--the census tabulation of women as "non-workers" is clearly a mistake.

b) the need to take seriously and do something about the miseries brought about by an unrelenting, traditional structure on one hand and the unplanned but detrimental results of insensitive development processes on the other hand, which have isolated women from the mainstream of development, rather than absorbed and adjusted women favourably/advantageously into development efforts.

c) the need to identify the real life needs of women themselves and of those who are associated with them in the family or the community like children, etc.

However, the mere realization of the real and critical issues does not and had not necessarily automatically led to modified practices. One reason is that the verbalization of these realizations is being made by more or less elite and urban-oriented women who are empathetic to and sensitive to the real problems affecting women. However, a great many other project workers are not so sensitive. Now it needs to be seen how those aware of the critical issues can influence policy, programmes and projects, research, education and action. Nonformal education efforts can play a major role in popularizing the criticial issues, and in organizing women to discover solutions.

Diversity in the Field

No definite and clear cut or uniform picture emerged as the successful way to do nonformal education for development. There is, however, no anxiety about this, as the women's development effort has been pioneered by a variety of agencies, voluntary and government, and a myriad of ideological based groups. There have been many different types of approaches -- old, new, tested, original--and therefore there is bound to be

variety. In effect, this report tries to pull common trends in these efforts together, while at times highlighting some differences.

One of the insights that came from the process of building the chain of contacts was that while networks exist in the Region, these networks are rarely overlapping or interconnected. Gandhians know about Gandhians; Christians know about Christians; Marxists know about Marxists; secular adult education organizations know about each other; but rarely did those within one circle know any or many from the other circles. Perhaps one of the main results of this study will have been to have made a beginning to interlink those with a common cause--women's development through nonformal education--regardless of the sponsorship or strategy.

"Links for the Chain"

Thus, this report is a beginning to the process of joining together those working in the Women's Development Movement, of strengthening the nonformal education component in development efforts. Nonformal education is a key approach in reaching deprived population groups, especially women.

As this is only a beginning, we hope to carry our interest and concern further with more concrete plans and actions. These will include widening our contacts, sharing experiences and learning from them. We seek your cooperation in making it a continuous process, and thereby making a longer and stronger "chain".

METHODOLOGY

The objective of the research study was to find out who was doing what in the field of nonformal education for women's development in South Asia. Once it was discovered who was working in this field, either doing field work or research, the task was to find out what problems they were facing with their work. The overall result of these inquiries would be that, for the Region, it would be possible to put together a report which would contain:

1. a list of organisations, agencies, persons who were working in this field

2. descriptive notes about organizations that had sent information about their work, or organizations that had been visited by the researchers

3. a list of field problems related to the work of women's development through nonformal education, problems listed by field workers, administrators, or researchers

4. a list of research reports, case studies, descriptive project reports, and other research uncovered as a result of the survey effort

5. a short analysis of the nonformal-education-for-women situation in each country, and in the Region.

It was not possible to do full justice to these and cover this huge and populous region as thoroughly as was required. However, whatever was possible within the limitations encountered, is collected together in this research report.

Definitions:

The key words in the research objective are: "Nonformal Education" and "Women".

"Nonformal Education" was defined very broadly to include "any programme that has a learning component in which some attitudes, knowledge, and/or skills are conveyed to adult women". (These works were conveyed in the covering letter that was sent to respondents contacted through the mail.) These few words were a summary of the understanding on nonformal education which is as follows:

> "Nonformal education is simply a convenient label covering a bewildering assortment of organized educational activities outside the formal system that are intended to serve identifiable learning needs of particular subgroups -- be they children, youths, or adults; males or females; farmers, mechants or craftsmen; affluent or poor families.
>
> The learning needs of these groups are extremely diverse; they include but extend well beyond those customarily catered to by formal schools or colleges. Hence, the chief distinguishing characteristic of nonformal education, viewed as a whole, is its much greater flexibility, versatility, and adaptability than formal education for meeting the diverse learning needs of virtually any kind of clientele, and for changing as the needs change...." (1)

(1) Philip H. Coombs, "Nonformal Education: Myths, Realities and Opportunities: Comparative Education Review 20 (October 1976): 282

> It is estimated that roughly half of the present educational effort in the developing countries is in the nonformal sector. Collectively, these programs exhibit characteristics indispensible to development. For example, they tend to arise in response to immediate needs; they are usually related to action and use; they tend to be short term rather than long; they have a variety of sponsors, both public and private; and they tend to be responsive to local community requirements. More importantly, nonformal education shows strong potential for getting at the human condition of those most likely to be excluded from the formal schools, the poor, the isolated, the rural, the illiterate, the unemployed and the under-employed, for being carried on in the context of limited resources, and for being efficient in terms of time and cost."(2)

So it was in this research study, that organizations and agencies were contacted about their work, whether they were working in the field of literacy, health, education, economic skills training, etc., or whether they were working in the field of organizing women around social problems, or organizing them into unions -- for in this work too, women learn new attitudes about themselves, knowledge of the system, and skills in groupbuilding and manoeuvring within the system.

A conceptual problem came to light in the course of this study. Many people do not understand the concept of "nonformal education". Without understanding of the approach, nor the importance of NFE in development, it is hard for programme organizers to work with zeal and enthusiam for women's development through nonformal education. The researchers found that they had to explain the concept, in some detail, to many of the researchers, field workers, and administrators whom they met in the course of the research effort. In addition, those who knew about NFE tended to give it a low status, as "second-best" when a formal education approach had failed. And even though the attempt was made to define nonformal education and adult education very broadly, to ask for information on social action programmes, nevertheless, some respondents failed to see their work in this context. A young women working with the women of the Chipko Movement (a fairly well-known social action/social education prgogramme in the hills of Uttar Pradesh in India) wrote that her work did not include any nonformal education. The programme is filled with ecological, and environmental knowledge, learning about the political and bureaucratic systems, learning skills in organization! This lack of conceptual clarity affected the process and the results of this study.

(2) Marvin Grandstaff, Alternative in Education: A Summary View of Research and Analysis on the Concept of Nonformal Education. East Lansing,Michigan State University, 1974. p.iv.

BANGLADESH

Tucked away in the eastern expanse of the Indian sub-continent, Bangladesh is the newest country in the South Asia region. For its comparatively recent origin, Bangladesh has seen several phases of women's development.

In the early years of its independence, all energies of the public and private organizations of development, politicians, leaders and women-workers were engaged in dealing with the aftermath of war. Over "3,000,000 women (had been) ... directly affected by the war -- raped, widowed or lost homes, family members and economic support." Besides, "(there was) no account of how many were left in severe poverty and social distress. Many had no means or capacity to earn. Most were housewives with virtually no educational background to use in earning a living."

In effect, the whole country's women were directly or indirectly reeling under the severe impact of the war. And being already in a position of lesser advantage, and low status, the result of such disruption for women was twofold, and more severe. The miseries of women -- physically, psychologically, socially and economically shattered, were most obvious and most agencies, organizations and groups of individuals, national or international who volunteered to rehabilitate the country, decided to first turn their attention to women. It was clear that the situation called for provision of basic life needs, like clothing, food, shelter, health and child care.

Subsequently, agencies and organisations working for women geared all their resources to organizing and providing these services. The critical factor of livelihood was sought to be tackled by providing vocational skills (mainly in handiwork, such as tailoring and weaving, and in production of handicrafts) to enable women to earn bread for their children and themselves.

Once this problem was apparently dealt with, several women's organizations, thinking for the future, began to ask the question: What next? What from the various alternatives does one take for the development of the entire country and for women specifically?

Probably, even the target group population of women have begun to feel the need for more than services or welfare. Several organisations of the country however, did not feel the need for change of strategy. Of those which did see the need for a change, (as will be seen from the analysis), they took off

from this initial stage to a more relevant, comprehensive action programme for women.

However, for them, and for all other agencies in the field of women's development, the already existing handicaps characterizing the society or the women in Bangladesh, must have been a force to reckon with. Some of these handicaps are over-population, illiteracy, low status of women, their confinement within houses and behind the veil. These aspects are enemies subjugating women which need to be defeated. Thus, appropriately, several organisations evolved into a new phase.

What particularly marks two countries of the South Asia region, namely Bangladesh and Pakistan, is a constant period of political turmoil created by the inability of any government to hold office on popular support for a sufficiently long time in order to evolve effective schemes that can be implemented to effect change for the better. Even at best, this kind of development is a very slow process, and with the additional difficulties of lack of political stability, the change is even slower. The several "coups" have affected the normal pace of growth for the country, and therefore for its women too!

Basic Statistics about Bangladesh Women

The first ever census of Bangladesh was conducted in 1973. The following texts, discussing various statistics related to women, are drawn from this census (unless otherwise mentioned). The total population of Bangladesh is 76 million, with 85% Muslims, 13% Hindus, 2% other religious communities, of which 35 million (46.05%) are women. This results in a male/female ratio of 108 males to 100 females.

Marriage and fertility -- though child marriage of below 14 years for girls have considerably decreased, most girls marry between 15 and 19years in the urban areas, while in the rural areas, the mean average is 13 years. Fertility is very high in Bangladesh and by the time women have completed their families, they have given birth to an average of 7 children.

Education -- the total literacy rate for the country is reported to be 20% while only 13.7% of all the Bangladeshi women are literate. Of all the urban women, 32% can read and write. Two-thirds of all women never to go primary schools. Only 1.9% of the rural females, aged 15 and above, receive any secondary education.

Laboring Women - in 1974, the labour force was very heavily male dominated. Of all males in the country, 53% were in the labour force, while only 3.5% of the females in the country were classified as "workers".

However, the female labour figures are grossly underestimated as women"s "invisible" work behind the four walls of her "Bari" (homestead), like processing rice, storing seed grain, tending cows and chickens, and other agriculture support work, is not recorded. Therefore, the book, Situation of Women in Bangladesh calls for an improved evaluation system of women's contribution to the nation's economic life. It is, however, a fact that very few (only 5.5% of urban women) work outside the home.

Of all the women recorded as participating in the civilian labour force, 69.8% are in agriculture, while 30.2% are in nonagriculture sectors. Therefore, the significance of the rural sector and especially the rural women, cannot be underestimated in any aspect of development work.

Eighty-three per cent, or 5 agencies, in rural areas claim to organise women's development through women's groups. Whether the groups are encouraged to take initiative in thinking or discussing about and acting for their needs and problems, is not gauged. Groups could be formed and directed from the outside. Then the ability of the group to make decisions, to put pressure for change where needed is undermined. That local women leaders are not trained by any of the 7 field organizations raises the question about people-oriented development. It is also difficult, though in a Muslim-oriented society that restricts women's movement and debars them from public attendance, to generate leadership. However, slowly but surely, this has to be done. Probably a diverted approach of leadership by para-professionals who deliver some services to the community may be effective. "Gonasasthaya Kendra" is encouraging its health workers to extend their contacts beyond the health services.

For a female population, the majority of whom have never stepped into a school, even the basic information about better ways of living, family life and development must be carried out through specially designed, attractive information-based courses. Unfortunately, only 2 out of 6 agencies in the rural areas and 2 out of 5 in the urban areas hve felt the importance of these. Once women come either for training, or for economic activity, or for a service, these sessions can be informally held, though the information will have to be well organised.

One may say without much hesitation that for some time to come, development agencies working with the poor in general, and with women in particular in the developing countries will have to continue organizing and delivering services like health care, child care, education, etc., considering that the poor are incapable of doing it totally on their own and the government systems have generally failed to reach the neediest. Delivering of services is an approach in itself to enter the community, and then around that service, the community can be organized.

Three agencies in the rural areas and an equal number in the urban areas are providing services like health, housing, sanitation, etc. to the community. Bangladesh is a new country and its government will take some time to extend even the basic amenities to the farthest of places. The country often faces severe natural calamities such as floods. Besides, transportation is a problem adversely affecting services delivered.

Three agencies in the rural and urban areas are involved in publishing articles, magazines and books on women's issues which is quite a high number (ill-matched with low literacy rates). However, sadly, none of the above agencies have reported about development of teaching and mass communication materials which are undoubtedly essential, and more effective than reading matter. Even cultural and religious programmes don't seem to be effectively used to communicate to the women -- clearly a case of thoughtless (mis)emphasis.

The more militant side of the women's movement like organizing/protesting against women's exploitation is still at a very low key with only 1 out of agencies in the village work involved in it. This is understandable knowing the "cocooned" existence of women in that society and further, the terrible psychosis implemented in women's minds after the war. Muslim law, in theory, claims indiscriminatory attitude towards women. However, its operationalization many times renders women helpless. Provision of legal aid is critical to Muslim, and really to all women. But in Bangladesh, none of even the major organizations seemed to have arranged for it.

The national Board of Women's Rehabilitation Programme was constituted in 1972 with eminent social and political personalities, and supported by basic facilities of money and manpower, carried out mainly rehabilitation work. Besides, it aimed to function as an umbrella organization for nationwide women's development efforts, widely support vocational training programme and organization for nationwide women's development efforts, widely support vocational training programmes and organize women through economic activity. Many training cum-production centres, on the principle of cooperation, were launched for

communities. Further,nonformal education centres were arranged for home-management and home economic training. Formal educational courses have also been arranged through technical institutes. Supportive services like day-to-day centres and creches to enable women to participate in the various educational programmes were started.

The Board further wants to train village-level functionaries, create more economic opportunities and develop more female leadership. In this way, the Board is trying to enter all aspects of women's development. It has now been installed in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. One can wait and watch what this biggest government venture in women's development can, and will achieve.

After the Board, the government initated a women's programme to be included in the integrated Rural Development Programme. The main thrust of this is to create opportunities for women in rural areas through the cooperative societies. Based on the "Comilla Model" of the women's home development programme, women here are organised to run their own cooperative after skill training and organization of production. The cooperatives are expected to be the centres for dissemination of other information such as health, family planning, training for income generation, literacy, etc. It has a hierarchial structure where local operatives are federated at the Block or District level. The work is being done in about 850 villages only, out of the 65,000 villages of Bangladesh. 850 in itself is not a small number. But that a government programme based country-wide should succeed in reaching only 1.3% of its target scope is rather depressing.

Nevertheless, both the government programmes hold vast potential and if some amount of political stability, along with a political will for women's development,prevail in Bangladesh, these two programmes can have a far-reaching impact.

Conclusion

It seems that having more or less finished tackling the overwhelming consequences that the war brought upon the women, many women's organizations in Bangladesh have embarked upon a new path, some even successfully. There is no dearth of ideas. If at all there is a lack of concrete future direction which could be surely overcome.

Even after being born in struggle and pain, Bangladesh has not been left far behind the other countries of the South Asia region in women's development.

INDIA

To summarily introduce India in order to complete a formality of the pattern of the Report presentation, would be doing an injustice to this country which is a sub-continent and much bigger than all the other countries of the South Asia Region put together. The vastness of India is not just a matter that is geographically overwhelming. The huge country also contains within itself 22 big and small states and 9 Union Territories (small countries in themselves) that curiously hold a vastly diverse people, communities, sub-cultures and women of different types, together.

An exhaustive understanding of the diversity of communities and their women in India is not fully possible only through the conventionally accepted classifications like: the rural women, the urban women, the tribal women, Muslim women,Christian women, high-caste women, women of the low-caste, out-caste women and so on. Women are of course classified this way. And this exercise will give some results. But one must also remember that these classifications are unique from state to state, over caste groups, over rural/urban sectors and yield a multitude of variation, each with peculiar implications for the respective groups. Therefore, to understand comprehensively the situation of Indian Women, all of these complex factors must be combined and permuted to arrive at an impossible number of varieties that are capable of being considered independently only for a study and any programme of action at a local level.

Besides the geographical, physical and cultural diversities, the various latent concepts on and about the women and her personality and their manifestations are ever so different. Even a basic requirement to uniformly conceptualize "woman" and "womanhood" in order to understand and describe the situation of women, or in order to organize any programme with them, is undermined and rendered inappropriate.

A compilation of extracts on Indian women rightly called "A World of Difference" states "..if there is one word that occurs frequently in describing the situation of women in India, it is 'differences'....In initiating (any) discussion (regarding women) therefore, one cannot generalize".

Conceptually, the Indian woman's personality is symbolized diverseley as a Mother Goddess in various temperaments, such as (1) Uma, a benevolent protector, or (2) Kali, terrifying force destroying evil, or (3) Abala, the weak one, to be protected in childhood by the father, in youth by her husband, and in old age by her sons, (regardless of whether they respect and

treat her as a human being!). Thus, one often comes across ordinary Indian women referring to their husbands as being all that matters, whether he was a drunkard, a wife-beater, or even an unfaithful person. Somehow the last symbolic personification, with all its various manifestation, has come to stay more popularly in the understanding of both men and women. The other personifications, suggesting 'shakti' or 'power' seem to have been deified and put away on worshipping altars and rarely, or never, affect real life.

In spite of these diverse understandings, which are significant and which have to be taken note of for each local community with which one wants to work, there is a certain underlying commonality about the understanding of the women of the need for a movement, with development and struggle. Each religious community residing in India, whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh etc., have customary laws and ensuing traditions that discriminate against women and impose several restrictions on (1) their behaviour, (2) pattern of relations and (3) mobility.

Further, the Hindu social structure is rigidly divided into closed, hierarchical groups -- the castes. The caste positions are assigned since birth with well-defined roles and limitations of that caste group, vis a vis all other caste groups and sub-groups.

Traditionally, the caste system not only defines the individuals position in the hierarchy but also stipulates his behaviour -- with whom he should eat and how; with whom he should socialize; to whom he should marry; what occupation he must take up; whom he must obey; and whom he must enslave or dominate by the virtue of his caste 'birthright'.

With changing times, the caste structures have modified, though not melted away. They have curiously adapted to new social forms or phenomena and even crystalized around these. For example, the urbanization process broke down the restrictions on inter-caste social mixing but yet, this did not organically upset its structure. Castes ossified around issues such as "urban housing" which resulted in caste groups setting up new housing colonies for their own caste members. This all-pervading Hindu social framework of conceptualizing/classifying human beings also applies to women who in their roles of upholders of family values adhered to caste rules more devotedly than men. The men could dare, even at the cost of social ostracisation, to break caste rules, but the women could not even dare.

The structure of the not-yet-modernized rural society upholds and nurtures caste systems and its principles even more readily

and successfully than the urban society. The rural women, rich or poor, therefore, is even more caste-minded than her urban counterpart. Caste divides her from other women of her local community.

Though caste is characteristic of only the Hindu social structure, it has permeated into other relative egalitarian religious communities, such as the Christian or Muslims, who practice it in their own curious ways, but probably not as rigidly. In this way, caste poses as an unsurmountable enemy of a really cohesive women's movement in India today.

Considering that this rigid structure and the basis on which it is founded is not crumbling and will not soon vanish, raises several questions about women's development schemes, women's nonformal education programmes which do not have an easy or a singular answer. A lot of issues on this problem need to be clarified before any planning or action programmes for women's development are undertaken.

Coming to the other systems that steer society -- economic and political, a majority of the women in India will have necessarily to struggle for a fair deal -- equal pay for equal work from the employer; unbiased consideration of her contribution to different sectors of the economy and the family; equal pay for equal work from the employer; unbiased consideration of her contribution to different sectors of the economy and the family; equal legal status and legal protection; and a respectable position in the modern social structure and system.

This struggle has begun, it now needs to be consolidated. Whether the ordinary women realizes this or not, whether she voices her sentiments or chooses to remain silent, it is long since that the older traditions have been given a jolt and people are grappling to find new solutions and new concepts within family, community and society.

It is not possible in this Report, to discuss exhaustively the history of the women's development movement in India or in the Region. We are trying to observe, understand and comment upon what exists today in the area of reaching women in the nonformal way with the desire to predict, control and if possible fruitfully direct future trends to strengthen the women's development movement.

However, for the vast Indian sub-continent with its varied historical backgrounds and situations, a few comments on certain historical processes and its present ramifications would be useful.

In Vedic times, it was believed that women were equally respected in positions of social, political, cultural authority. After the Epic Ages, the Smritis refer to women as more or less lower creatures than men. They were to be protected, married off, and kept at a distance. Thus began a gradual degeneration of women's position, justified by the Smritikaras and aggravated by the rise of high caste-ism, a series of Muslim invasions and the solidifying of caste structures up to the British times. Then the waves of change and need to rise up to new systems, administrative and educational, introduced by the colonists, began to be felt by some social reformers.

These social reformers tried slowly but surely and conscientiously, in struggle and in rebellion, to tear off the ugly traditions imprisoning the women. Women began to take education, facilitated by the foreign missionaries and the British Government, simultaneously as a freedom struggle. As this fight for freedom came to a boiling point, enough women were ready to join it, and indeed joined it mainly at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Some binds of tradition that had no doubt loosened, gave way and a big leap forward was taken, such that was not known before. In the mood of the freedom struggle, the break was justified. But improvement in the conditions of women generally had to be worked on more seriously and consolidatedly.

In the meantime, the Russian revolution, and its claim for women's equal status and opportunities, along with the class struggle, had created contemporary Left Group in India, to think of the abominable conditions of women here. After independence, the democratic, political system of the country and the welfare state did not halt any of the various efforts -- missionary, Gandhian or Leftist. These efforts for the country's development and the upliftment of women grew within set ideological framework rather rigidly.

A little later, Western development models (sponsored mainly by the government) based on top-heavy development processes to permeate through line-agencies to the neediest, and the organizational model of strengthening the poorest groups to acquire the most benefit from development schemes, were also started.

And today, all these efforts and approaches in their original forms and in forms of complex mixtures of two or more exist and are being modified and evolved to suit new ideas, new concepts, new learning and exploded myths.

Types of Organizations

In order to factually present the situation according to the data collected, it is realistic clearly to spell out of the types of organisations in the field of women's development. India is the biggest country in the South Asia region and has the highest number of agencies in the field, in fact at all levels of development. We received information on about 122 agencies.

The government in the country has thought seriously about women's development mainly in the context of their welfare. Therefore, whenever Welfare Boards and semi-government bodies were commissioned, their preoccupation was with providing self-defined services to women and children, for these two groups were considered deprived; Women were labelled 'deprived' and were administered doses of welfare in the form of women's groups (mahila mandals) that were organised for them to learn skills, mainly those of sewing. These schemes claim to make women economically independent.

No effort was even made to find out the causes of the deprivations affecting women, let alone any move to remedy them. Therefore, Indian women continue to be considered for development within or along with welfare schemes like the applied nutrition programme (to improve nutritional status of children, the Integrated Child Development Programme to affect all-round development of the child. These schemes and most of those affecting women contine to be administered by social welfare departments of the governments. One does not need to elucidate further on the "status" of women in the Government's framework of development for the country.

Some of the semi-government schemes set up at the request of non-government organizations in order to cover up failures of existing general development schemes seek to provide infra-structurral support to the needy population which includes women. These are: special development banks for credit services for the poor (one or two especially for women); marketing outlet for handicrafts, cottage industries and home home products (fields in which women more easily participate); technical and other guidance through industrial corporations and so on. These are encouraging developments and if somehow communities, especially the women's population, can be geared to make use of these, they can be very helpful. However, bureaucracy and 'red-tape' often nullify the advantages that would have accrued. In fact, they sometimes cause disservice and harrassment to an illiterate and unaware population (women also).

However, in India, the unique feature and a redeeming one is the existence of numerous voluntary organizations trying to reach in various ways, the millions who live in utter poverty and destitution. Many of these organizations which started as service-giving and welfare promoting organizations with its charity orientation, evolved into newer phases of women's development. (Some Gandhian and missionary organisations have changed their approaches). This includes a more realistic perspective of this situation and of the needs of women of different classes in the society. Here it must also be mentioned that several voluntary organizations, big and small, have not been able to take off from that initial stage. Therefore, both the types of agencies exist side-by-side.

It is mainly these voluntary organizations which are giving the lead, charting new paths, and experimenting with newer and more effective approaches to solving the physical and social problems of the poor. However, the voluntary effort cannot yet be envisaged as one big consolidated effort. It is rather like several streams heading for the ocean in their self-destined courses. These isolated efforts are slowly growing and need to be well coordinated, discussed and exchanged. That task remains to be done....

Conclusion

India is a leading country in the developing world in education, industrialization and urbanization. It is also a very vast country. But for all its resources, modernization and development, it has not significantly affected the traditional social fabric that imposes a restrictive environment for women's development. In effect, these processes have many a time affected women adversely and one of the issues to fight against is the insensitive development policies of the government which does not seriously consider issues relevant to women. On the contrary, development plans isolate rather than integrate women into the development mainstream.

Therefore, India unlike any other developing country, has to cover a lot of ground in the upliftment of its subjugated womenfolk in all possible ways. It is true that efforts have started in earnest, at least in the voluntary sector. Many organizations have tried and succeeded in identifying the isues crucial to women's situation and to their development. Many of these have even been analytical enough to identify detailed needs of a cross-section of women-caste and class-wise. Efforts of all sorts and approached of all kinds and varieties have been tried and modified, and innovations are ever-so-many. India is in a position to present a variety of models to learn from. Yet all these efforts need to be coordinated properly and brought on a common platform for discussion, and agreement on minimum common issues affecting

women's condition in this complex country. The government has no doubt invested considerable resources for women. But unfortunately the government (politicians and bureaucrats) has not a realistic perspective of the women's problems. Even the planners have blatantly rejected women's issues although separate issues affecting women like education, or marriage and divorce, or inheritance, etc., have sought to be dealt with, but without a comprehensive understanding of women's problems.

However, the government must be given credit for having sponsored, through an appointed committee, a Status of Women Report, called Towards Equality in 1974 that boldly lays out the facts and figures and ensuing implications, issues and recommendations for planners and for action programmes for government development officials and for anyone who works for women's welfare and development. It remains to be seen how the government incorporates the recommendations; in the Draft Sixth Five Year Plan, a beginning seems to have been made....

NEPAL

Nepal is a country in the Southern Himalayan Range with the Tibet (China) border to the north, and the Indian border to the South.

According to the Census Report of 1971, the population of Nepal was 11.56 million, of which 5.74 million (49.7%) were women. The same proportion is hoped to be maintained even in the 1981 census.

Out of Nepal's active female labour force, 98.2% are engaged in agriculture (according to the 1971 census). This is a high percentage, but since over 90% of the country is rural, the figure is not surprising.

Up to date literacy figures indicate that the literacy rate is as low as 5.2% for women, while the literacy rate for the whole population is 19.2%.

The 1971 census education enrolment figures records females as 3.89% of those having registered for some educational course, of which 2.7% is the figure for female enrolment in primary schools, 1.02% of the total Secondary and High School enrolment, and only 0.17% enrolled in institutions beyond the high school level.

Although on the whole, Nepal is characterized predominantly by the Hindu culture, of philosophy and way of life, however, the country has been geographically as well as ethnoiogically divided into (a) the Hilly Regions in the north, and (b) the Terrai or Plain Region along the southern border.

The Hilly Region is inhabited by Hill Tribes who as most tribal cultures do, have a less restricted social structure for its women than non-tribal groups. The tribal women have been found to be more responsive to Women's Development work and projects in spite of the tremendous hardships of nature coupled by under-development and little or no communication and transport systems.

On the other hand, the Southern Region, in keeping with the Hindu culture, has the caste system, complex social structure, and is very restrictive on women's behaviour. The caste-bound women there are less forthcoming and much more hesitant than than their tribal counterparts to participate in the new processes of development, either as leaders or as beneficiaries.

A government Adult Education Officer of the Nonformal and Functional Adult Education Programme was recorded as saying that even in the Terrai (Southern Regions) it is mostly the migrant hill women who come forward to work as instructresses and village level workers, rather than the women of the local Hindu communities.

In Nepal, communications systems and the road links are so very poor that the general process of development is hampered. This point need not be elaborated much, for the mountainous terrain makes it self explanatory. However, the result is that there is an unequal distribution of development resources, whether they be delivered via the government systems, or by the non-governmental organisations. For example, the four Women's Affairs Training Centres (WATC) of the Dept of Home and Panchayat meant to train village level workers and lay women in handicrafts and literacy, are in the four major urban areas of the country and attract mainly girls from the nearby villages. The distant interior and hard to reach villages of the mountains and plains remain relatively untouched.

Types of Agencies

It was possible to gather data from 13 major agencies in Nepal working either for women only, or incorporating special programmes for women into their activities. This information was gathered from interviews or from questionnaires. Most of these agencies fall mainly into 3 categories:

1) Agencies/programmes as part of the Ministries of His Majesty's government (HMG) of Nepal

2) Agencies created by an Act or Resolution of the Government, meaning that it is directly or indirectly controlled by government personnel

3) Agencies organized and run by missionaries or other international organizations.

Table N-1 shows the break-up of the 13 major organizations interviewed, whose involvement in women's programmes has been at any of the following levels: policy making and planning; project drafting and funding implementation; coordination; research and evaluation; organizing conferences, seminars.

TABLE N-1

	Number of Organizations (N-13)
Organizations/Programmes within government Departments	3
Organizations under complete/partial patronage of the government	5
International Organizations	3
Missionary Organizations	1
Voluntary Organization (government aided financially)	1

It is significant to note that there is very little purely voluntary effort in the field of Women's Development in Nepal. Even if organizations have or had voluntary status, they seek or have come under the patronage and control of the government, or of a semi-government organization.

One of the reasons for little or no voluntary effort may be the existence of the Nepal Women's Organization which was meant to be an umbrella organization consolidating all efforts of women's welfare and development in the country. The Nepal Women's Organization was assigned the role of upholding the interest of women, and of pursuing their development. This objective and mandate was so all-inclusive that it may have made any purely voluntary effort outside the shade of the NWO's umbrella, insignificant. Voluntary agencies on their

own would not really be able to generate resources from the government, or secure legitimate status.

Nature of Activities/Programmes

What are these government, missionary and international agencies doing in Nepal? How much of a Nonformal Education component exists in the programmes? What is the nature of the nonformal education effort? The answers to these questions will reveal the nature and extent of Nonformal education for women in Nepal. The answers to these questions, beside providing factual information about NFE, will point to whether the NFE process is being perceived and used as a key factor in women's development in Nepal. It is not inappropriate to say that these 13 organizations, from which data have been gathered, represent the major trends in Women's Development and nonformal education work in Nepal.

Of the 13 agencies, all (100%) covered work in the rural areas, while only 10 (77%) of them directed part of their programme towards the urban population, or have the provision to reach out to the urban population when needed. However, the main focus of all the 13 agencies remains rural, which is as it should be, considering that over 95% of the country's population is rural.

It is striking to note that 69% of the agencies involved in rural areas and 70% of all organisations that are working in urban areas, have either done some research and evaluation work, or have plans and resources to do so. Most agencies are involved in survey research to gather information before launching a new project, or for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of their on-going programmes. Other organisations mainly government patronized, have as one of their main objectives, research and evaluation of the programmes for development of the government or of other agencies. Most of the research and evaluation has been done about and for rural programmes mainly because the majority of the work has been directed towards rural people.

Training in handicrafts and homecraft seems to be the inevitable unconscious tendency of almost all field organizations working for women. Most organizations launch such programmes with a traditional understanding of women's roles as home-tenders, seamstresses, light workers, etc., or with concern that the women cannot do without a skill to bring in a supplementary income, or at least to cut down on their own family expenses. However, the crucial factor that these organized programmes overlook is that the various skill development programmes meant for achieving self reliance among women make little sense when over 90% of village women are engaged in agriculture.

Further, even if appropriate skill development programmes are undertaken after needs survey, and the acceptability of these skills among the local women has been ascertained, yet the programmes are rendered ineffective because they are rarely backed by supportive resources and mechanisms, like credit, supply of raw materials, marketing etc. The training programmes of most agencies have not been coordinated with government infrastructure agencies like banks and marketing boards, and the women's nonformal education skill training agencies have not organized this infrastructure either. The data revealed that only 23% of the agencies working in rural areas, and only 20% of those in urban areas have organised economic activities like production and marketing centres for cooperatives, etc. Regarding credit facilities for the women's income generating activities, 15% of agencies working in rural areas, and 10% of urban based agencies have organized these needed resources.

Other problems in this region cited by a Nepalese researcher, were: 1) duplication and superficiality due to lack of coordination; 2) lack of innovation in the programmes since their inception in the 50's 3) more competitive rather than complementary relations among agencies.

However, there have emerged efforts to coordinate various organizations or line agencies through the Women's Services coordination Committee (WECC) or through the SFDP, though it is not always understood how to go about it. Bina Pradhan, in her book 'Institutions Concerning Women in Nepal (The status of Women in Nepal, Vol.1, Part 3) refers to WSCC's own programmes of coordination and objective to do away with duplication of functions; "Many of the short term and long term programmes planned for the next five year period are exactly the same areas of work that the Nepal Women's Organization and the WZTC have been running". Ms Pradhan concludes that "if the...trend continues, the whole purpose of the committee as a coordinating body will be defeated".

Coordination is one needed function, consultancy is another. To be able to deal with the multitude of problems that invariably arise in starting and running development programmes, help is needed. A competent support or consultancy service must be available. In Nepal, international agencies are mostly in a position to do this work; they have the manpower and material resources to provide thorough guidance. But there is always a danger of these failing to grasp the cultural significance of factors hampering development. Many times these agencies entrust the consultancy function to people unfamiliar with the culture and way of life of the people. Further, not many agencies seek professional guidance anyway.

The condition of nonformal education programmes and processes can be understood not only by working, knowing what they do, but also by seeing what they do not do. Although over 90% of the women of Nepal are involved in agriculture activities, only 1 of the agencies seriously considered extending knowledge of new/efficient agricultural practices to rural women. Only 15% of the agencies are involved in giving information and knowledge for agriculture allied activities like poultry/bee-keeping, kitchen gardening etc. The miserable figures (One organization or 8%) reflect the meagre effort of providing sound home management techniques, appropriate to running poor women's households efficiently. Again, only 8% of agencies in rural areas, and 10% of those in urban areas do anything about providing legal aid to women.

Although 77% of all agencies covered in Nepal have started field work or research programmes in urban areas, only one women's welfare agency has realized the need for teaching urban-oriented skills like shorthand and typing. Nepal is a newly developing country with a little over 40% of its population in the urban centre. However, most of the activitiesof planning coordination, training organizers of programmes, research and evaluation, are operating from urban areas. The urban oriented men and women, mainly the elite, were found planning operating and monitoring even the rural programmes. The city dominates the rural scene.

For effective communication, appropriate and attractive teaching and learning materials, as well as mass communication aids, must be available. Unfortunately, in Nepal only 31% of agencies in rural areas, and 30% of those in urban areas prepare their own teaching and mass communication aids. None except two organizations (CERID and the United Missions to Nepal Community Health Programme) were observed to have developed innovative teaching materials appropriate to the training programs. Also not many except one, seemed to use the cultural and mass entertainment programmes with women as effective teaching methods.

PAKISTAN

Situated on India's north western front, the Islamic state of Pakistan with a chequered history since its birth in 1947, baffles any social science researcher.

The political experiments ranging from a democratically elected government to military dictatorships and assasinations confuses one as to what course this country with a majority Muslim population is said to take. The political trend, of course will decide the social processes and particularly the development trends of its people and indeed its women.

From pledging for a democratic form of government that assumes equality between sexes in government and equality of opportunities for both men and women in all spheres of activity with no special restriction of women, to a phase of military dictatorship on to democracy and then on to another phase of dictatorship coupled with impositions of the traditional Islamic law with its special restrictive provisions for women, makes one wonder as to the stage at which its women are, what are their needs, and what their problems.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the West Asian countries, coupled with wealth and the ability to participate more significantly in the international market system is bound to affect women intriguingly. Islamic fundamentalism has arisen and openly defied western materialism but the latter cannot be got rid of easily, because it flows in to the countries of West Asia in the form of 'petro-dollars'! The crucial question for development in this situation is: Can both the processes exist together?

Every country has a right to adopt its own system of law and Islamic law can be one of them. What is significant about the law of the land is the practical implication for the people and for the womenfolk in particular.

The apparently restrictive tenets for women's behaviour are claimed to be detrimental for women's progress in modern times within the Islamic law according to some of its opponents. This totally new process - the resurgence of Islamic religious fervour had developed recently and spread like wild fire. How does it affect women and their issues? What are women doing to modify such a situation? What scope is there to grow and progress within such a system?

Unfortunately all the queries and doubts remain more or less unanswered as little or no information has flowed in from Pakistan for this project.

SRI LANKA

Background

Being predominantly a Buddhist country, Sri Lanka has the unique tradition among all South Asian countries of having a freer social structure that is minimally discriminatory against women. From the ancient times, Buddhist precepts claimed an equal status for women and provided them with opportunities to participate in public life and in all areas

of religion and spirituality. Even today, associated with the smallest of Buddhist shrines or temples, is a group of lay-women and a group of lay-men who come forward to work for the temple's upkeep and celebration of various festivals. This provides already a traditional cause for women to come together and work together enabling women's participation outside their homes and in groups to work for their own development.

Although the status of the males and females is not discriminatory, the roles still are well-defined for women in this sphere of household duties, child-rearing and home or farm based economy, irrespective of their jobs outside homes. The men must necessarily seek jobs outside their homes or work in the fields.

Another feature of the Sinhalese family structure is that couples after marriage usually live in nuclear households around the parental home, or further away. They are supposed to be self-reliant. The increasing economic stress of the present time subsequently results in great pressure on women to also work to support these nuclear families. This is not always the case in joint family households where the problems of day-to-day survival are shared by all. The women are taken care of within the whole family even as they contribute their labour to its upkeep.

The education statistics for women show that after free access was made available to schools in 1945, the enrolment of girls into formal education system steadily rose to almost equal that of males in recent times. More women than ever before are passing out of the formal system acquiring in the process a status-consciousness that makes them desire white-collar jobs, which are not easily available. The growing economy can accommodate mainly skilled and semi-skilled personnel for which the formal school graduates are not equipped.

Influenced by all these factors, therefore, the women's movement in Sri Lanka seems to be directed mainly in procuring a more diversified role frame for women through diversified programmes of training and more opportunities to compete equally in all spheres of the economy in the rural as well as the urban areas.

However, the whole movement is not as simple as that! Several complex factors are still contributing to giving the women's movement the nature that it possesses today. These are a combination of historic, economic, socio-cultural, educational and also political elements.

1. After a population explosion in the '50s that created a labour-force explosion, subsequently, there also started the decline of the plantations and export economies. This reached its climax in the '70s and led to inflation and massive unemployment.

2. The education expansion and increase in the enrolment for higher education until the 1960s created a class of educated unemployed of which a very large segment was women.

3. The decade of the '70s also brought along with the massive unemployment, a youth unrest following at its heels.

4. The formal school system has failed according to most women's development organizations reporting to us, to prepare young men and women to stand on their own feet. The school education only procured a certificate making one eligible for higher studies which 50% of the population were not able to avail themselves of.

All these conditions affected the women as much or even more, than they did the males. This was because although the problems were equally critical for both, the opportunities to remedy them were limited for females. Up to then, most organisations for women's welfare had restricted their activities to the traditional roles of women, and therefore they could not stand up to the changed needs of women.

Subsequently, most of the government schemes of the '70s were devised mainly to tackle the problem of youth unrest and unemployment. These schemes were Graduate Training Scheme, Cooperative Farms, National Youth Councils Training Programmes, Settlement Schemes, Farm Women's Agriculture Extension, and so on.

As most women marry at a relatively high age in Sri Lanka and many of them took secondary school education, or even higher education, they were also clamouring for an opportunity to earn in order to support their own families. Some worked even to delay marriages.

These women, either school drop-outs or school certicicate holders, and even non-professionally trained graduates, were forced to turn to a non-formal system to gain some skills and knowledge that would equip them to be capable of earning.

Several organisations launched training programmes in a non-formal way in the rural as well as the urban areas. This was done with a view to equip young men and women with some marketable skills or vocations that enabled them to become self-reliant.

Conclusion

The overall impression about the nonformal education process in Sri Lanka can be summarized thus: Intensive efforts are being made to impart vocational skills to put women into the market economy through urban industries and services as well as enable them to possess handiwork skills that can provide them with a supplementary income. As far as the government is concerned, of the training programmes of all departments, only the department of agriculture has farm women's extension programmes. Several programmes launched by the government in the late '60s and '70s had sought to involve youth, men and women, on full-time farm activities as a means of livelihood.

The various efforts by the government through a nonformally organised system, are worth studying.

1) the Ministry of Agriculture's nonformal courses serviced by 3 regional agricultural centres;

   a) in-service courses in scientific agriculture and farm management for members of Young Farmer's Clubs. In 1978, 80,000 students enrolled, of which 47% were women.

   b) Farm Women's Agricultural Extension Programme to train women extension workers and village leaders to increase income generating activities and to improve rural living standards. This useful course suffers from lack of trained personnel, quality material and poor marketing facilities.

   c) The Youth Settlement Schemes (training cum employment) that imparted agriculture training to youth to etch out a livelihood on an agricultural activity, and

   d) cooperative farms -- a collective enterprise for training in agriculture and industrial skills which failed as economic ventures.

2) Ministry of Industries training programmes:

   a) department of Small Industries have 344 training centres for school leavers that train men and

and women in a variety of handicraft production. However, the sex demarcation is evident here, as girls join for lacemaking, coir work and textiles, and men for carpentry, metal work, etc. Most of the trainees are potential instructors which attracts several candidates.

Not much is being done at present to engage women in new agricultural practices and little beyond some useful knowledge about home affairs, child care, and women's groups is being imparted by agencies like the Lanka Mahila Samiti and Sarvodaya. Commenting on the extensive effort of nonformal education efforts by government and voluntary organisations in general, Dr Jayaweera says:

> *"Women have had relatively easier access to, and have utilized vocational educational opportunities in traditional areas in the service sector. In the rural society in which the majority of women live and work, access to agricultural education has been severely restricted. Training in traditional rural industries presents a depressing picture of second class status and poverty. Modern industry promoted exploitative training for routine jobs but in juxtaposition there is under-utilisation of available facilities in institutions and in the National Apprenticeship Board Programmes. Pre-school and family and civic-oriented adult education have yet to receive adequate attention."*

Most women in Sri Lanka are educated, alert and more aware of their situation than most women of this Region. However, this great potential women-force has not been channelled significantly for a lasting women's movement, for wider issues about changing the women's attitudes towards their traditional roles and for affecting the behaviour and attitude of men and society in general, towards women. But creditable efforts have been made to pressurize the government to give due consideration to women's problems of development as is seen by the creation of a Women's Bureau.

How many from the masses will join some of the still elite women's organizations steering women's development remains to be seen.

WOMEN AND WORK

A GAME OF UNEQUAL PARTNERS

Swasti Mitter*

A major fallacy of development planners is the almost invariable assumption that the impact of modernisation is not differentiated by sex and class. The Brandt report is a prime example.

Even radical thinkers who take account of the class composition of societies, usually shun any discussion of sexual politics. The real contradiction, Marxists argue, is between labour and monopoly capital; hammering the gender conflict will only dilute the real issue.

In 'liberal' minds women are seen as the last beneficiaries of the 'trickle-down' theory - any move that helps improve a country's comparative advantage and terms of trade is bound to benefit women as well as men.

An increasing volume of evidence worldwide refutes this theory.

It is not surprising that women do not automatically share the benefits of modernisation and technological progress. It is not a game of equal partners. Women begin with a disadvantage and, like other oppressed sectors of society, they pay the price whilst elites enjoy the fruits of progress.

Women's unequal position is disturbingly similar all over the world. In the United States, for every male dollar earned, a women earns 60 cents; in India, for every 200 male rupees, a women earns 100.

However, these facts refer only to the formal wage sector. They ignore the greater part of women's contribution which takes place either in the household or in the 'informal sector' where exploitation is far greater.

Even in the black economy there are obvious sex differences - whereas tax avoidance or 'tax fiddles' are characteristics of male workers, females tend to offer themselves for menial jobs done 'on the cheap' for very low wages.

The roots of women's weak bargaining position lie in the sexual division of labour in the family where it is considered 'natural' or 'normal' for women to be responsible for the 'housework' and for the care of the young and the old.

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The Lacemakers of Narasapur by Maria Miles, is one of the most poignant case-studies of how technological changes in agriculture alter the balance of power between castes, classes and sexes.

When the green revolution arrived in Andra Pradesh with its need for fertilisers and other capital inputs, it increased polarisation within the rural economy - the rich farmers became richer, the poorer ones, increasingly pauperised, became landless. Women workers lost their economic status completely and became 'invisible' homeworkers, working for a pittance to produce lace for the world market factories.

These women are not even considered 'workers' but 'housewives' despite their 6-8 hour day at lace-work. The men's illusion that the women produce lace in their leisure time accounts in part for their opposition to the women becoming organised. Yet this is the only hope for improving their lot.

In the industrial sector, the advent of new technology has hit women in a different way, especially in the Third World. It has led to a massive increase in female employment but at exploitation wages.

CHEAP AND DOCILE WORKERS

New technology, especially micro-electronics and information technology, has provided transnational corporations with powerful tools to undermine labour solidarity, especially in the West. Deskilling of the labour force means that most labour intensive jobs can be done anywhere in the world - and women in the Third World provide the cheapest and the most docile labour force.

Developing countries in their eagerness to entice multinationals to invest, use women as their selling point. A Malaysian brochure claims "the manual dexterity of the oriental female is known the world over. Her hands are small and she works fast and with extreme care. Who could be better qualified by nature and inheritance to contribute to the efficiency of a bench assembly production line than the oriental girl?"

The health hazards from peering down microscopes or working with hazardous chemicals in microchip factories are now getting more publicity - but mainly through the efforts of women's organisations. The women often get little help from the state or the trade unions.

The experiences of women during hostilities at Control Data in South Korea or Levi's in Tennessee point to the same phenomenon - the men do not support the women but feel they have a disciplinary role to play.

The women, often exhausted, are thrown out of their jobs in their early twenties. Prostitution is often the only form of livelihood left. In the Phillipines and Thailand prostitution tourism is one of the most important export-earners, and hence the state have a vested interest in supporting it.

However women, even oriental women, are not passive and docile and their strength is being shown in a large number of uprisings throughout the world. The summer strike in the Bataan export processing zone in the Philippines came as a rude awakening to the managers and the President Marcos.

In response the transnationals have a new strategy. They no longer esstablish factories, but rely on 'outwork'. 'Homeworking' is made possible by further deskilling of the production process as new technology is introduced.

INVISIBLE AND ISOLATED

New technology has brought a similar phenomenon to developed countries. In the non-manufacturing sector everyone who needs information, from stockbrokers to social-workers, advertising agents to journalists, will use a computor.

The same telephone lines that make terminal to terminal mail delivery possible allow a worker to take home a terminal that can exchange information with a distance office base.

Working from home could be a tremendous boon: it could reduce petrol consumption, highway congestion and air pollution. It could provide work-hour flexibility and an opportunity for both parents to play a greater part in child-caring.

In practice, however, new technology has only managed to create a new type of home work, in high-tech industries they are called 'remote workers' but they share the same conditions of isolation and non-unionisation as traditional home-workers.

New technology has brought hardly any change in the status of women in society or in the family. Computors, as Alvin Toffler says in his book *The Third Wave* allow married secretaries caring for small children to continue working. In other words, they allow these women to do not one but two jobs.

Indeed new technology provides a highly effective tool for extracting the maximum labour from 'invisible' non-unionised female workers operating from the 'comfort' of their homes.

Despite this pessimistic analysis there are signs of hope. Already women are organising themselves. They are looking for ways to combat the isolation of workers who are pushed in to the formal or home sector. The self-employed Women's Association in Ahmedabad, India, provides a shining example of how marginalised women can organise themselves.

It is time that the male-dominated trade union movements became aware of these powerful steps, complementary to their own, that women workers are taking to challenge the power of monopoly capital. A concerted lobby of NGOs, trade unions and women's movements would be far more difficult to ignore than any one sector acting on its own.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR, AND BY, WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA*

Chris Lee
Australian Association
of Adult Education.

INTRODUCTION

Women's Education and Development

Education for women as a special needs area in Australia has not been generally a product of government educational planning but has developed in an ad hoc way, often in response to needs created by changes in women's social role and their perception of their rights. It needs to be seen against a general background view of Australian society. Unlike many of the other countries in the region, Australia has no National Development Plan as such. The Government of the day implements policies which by and large accord to the platforms of the political parties forming the Government. In regard to women's needs, while there is no official government acceptance of a developmental plan, the National Women's Advisory Council which was established in 1978 as a consultative body to the Federal Government has developed a Plan of Action as a statement of suggested principles and objectives necessary to raise the status of women in Australia. In regard to Education, this Plan states:

"3. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

3.1 Objectives

3.1.1 To provide equal access for girls and women to educational and training opportunities of all types and at all levels in all sectors of society, thus enabling them fully to develop their personalities and abilities and to participate on an equal footing with men in achieving personal self-reliance, furthering the socio-economic development of Australia, and improving the quality of life."

Definition of non-formal education

In Australia, the term 'non-formal education' is not generally used. 'Formal education' may be defined as that administered by a recognized and funded institution and leading to standardized credentials. 'Non-formal education' is referred to as adult education, community education, community development and self-education. These terms are used in a fairly ad hoc manner and

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*Prepared for the ASPBAE Conference on "Nonformal Education for Women" Japan, October, 1982.

and in general are interchangeable in meaning. This situation reflects diversity of community* as well as government provision of non-formal education in Australia, and also highlights the absence of policy linking Australian non-formal education with overall community development. However, many providers and initiators of non-formal education in Australia have a profound concept of education as providing the path towards personal and social change.

THE AUSTRALIAN SCENE

General

Politically, Australia is a federation of 7 States, each of which has its own government in addition to the Federal Government. Geographically, Australia is a vast country (7.7 million square kilometers) with 90% of the land too dry or otherwise unsuitable for agriculture. In spite of the fact that most of its material resources come from the land (cattle and sheep, crops, and minerals) it is one of the most urbanized countries in the world, with 85% of a population of approximately 15 million living in towns and cities, 60% living in 6 State capital cities. Women comprise 50.7% of the total population.

Ethnic Composition

Originally Australia was populated by an estimated 300,000 Australian Aborigines who lived as hunter gatherers in ecological balance with the Australian land. The earliest European immigrants were convicts and free settlers, escaping from intolerable conditions in England, Ireland and Scotland. The solitary, pioneering nature of life in Australia at that time led to a social situation in which women were at a disadvantage.

Since 1778 there have been many waves of European, Asian, Middle Eastern and Latin American migrations. Many have been refugees from war, famine or oppression, but some have been deportees and others seekers of fortune. Since the Second World War there has been a high rate of immigration so that approximately 25% of the current population consists of first generation immigrants of a variety of ethnic origins. The latest wave of immigrants have been from Timor, Indo-China and Poland. Thus, present-day Australia has a mixture of cultural traditions.

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* The term 'community' in Australia is broadly used to describe a large group of people with a common interest, not necessarily defined by living in one area. Examples would be a church community, a school community, or a neighbourhood community. Because of the high mobility often involved in work, education and leisure activities, most Australians belong to several distinctly different communities, and often do not identify strongly with the residential community.

Women's Life Cycle

The median age of the first marriage for women is 21.9 years (compared with 20.9 years in 1974), and 80% of women are married by the age of 30. There are high rates of both divorce and re-marriage, and these are increasing. The median age at the birth of the eldest child is 25.2 years (compared with 23.2 years in 1971). Most women have completed child-bearing by the age of 30. This has created a situation in which many women are seeking alternatives to the role of home-maker and child-rearer. In many instances there is economic pressure for the woman to re-enter the workforce, either from necessity or from the desire for an increased standard of living. In other situations the economic considerations are secondary and the woman is seeking her personal growth and fulfilment through some sort of useful and interesting activity.

Position of Women

In theory, Australian women share equal rights with men and are not discriminated against in law. The Australian Government is nominally committed to equality of opportunity, elimination of discrimination and equal status for women. The Commonwealth and four of the State and Territory Governments have units specifically devoted to monitoring and promoting the interests of women in government programs and policies. The impact and existence of these units fluctuates with the political situation, and usually they will have only token powers. Equal Opportunity Boards, set up to remove discrimination against women, exist in some, but not all States, and their real effectiveness is limited by a lack of legislative backing. An even greater barrier to women's full participation in society lies in the attitudes towards women held by many Australians.

In pioneering days, an ethos of hardy independence "mateship" developed from the solitary and often mobile lifestyle of that time. In such a situation, women were necessary for sex, domestic work, and motherhood; otherwise they were generally considered redundant and a burden. Recent examinations of Australia's social history suggest that these attitudes have tended to persist into modern times, with these characteristics of toughness, loyalty, and independence, often exaggerated into an over-valuing of aggressive masculinity and a devaluing of all that is considered "soft", such as cultural sophistication, emotional openness, and women.

There is also a heritage from the Judaeo-Christian tradition which personifies woman as a creature who will lead man from the straight and narrow path. This attitude was brought over by the earliest immigrants - notably Catholic Irish potato farmers, who in general did not treat women with much sophistication.

Yet another factor, social historians suggest, was the generally low self-esteem of the first settlers - being convicts or the unsuccessful - which resulted in their keeping women in an even lower position of esteem.

All these historical social influences combined to creat a situation in the present era where women "have a legal right to do almost anything but they are in fact hedged in with invisible barriers which keep them, as it were, on the outer of our national life".*

Women and Employment

Historically, women have not had equal employment opportunities and remuneration or educational opportunities. Although women have not yet reached parity with men in these fields, improvement has occurred, notably since 1972.

Women comprise 37% of the labour force in Australia (compared with 32% in 1970). Of all women over 15 years, 44.7% are employed (compared with 32% in 1970), and 35.4% of these are working part-time (compared with 26% in 1970).

Although women in Australia are legally entitled to be paid the same as a man doing the same job, the average female full-time earnings are 76.5% of the average male earnings. This reflects a situation where women are often expected to enter lower status (and lower paid) occupations such as shop assisting and clerical work, and in higher-status occupations such as the professional fields, they will rarely enter the top ranks of decision-making.

In 1982, the rate of unemployment is high (7%, compared with less than 1% during the 50s and 60s). For those between the ages of 16 and 25, and those over 55, the rate of unemployment is 20%. There is an attitude prevalent in some groups that working women will be taking jobs away from men, and that married women especially should not be in paid employment while there are so many unemployed.

Another prevalent attitude, which is only slowly changing, is that women with pre-school and school-age children should stay at home to look after the children. This attitude is strongly reflected in the lack of child-care facilities. While the number of pre-school centres has increased in recent years, most of these are private centres whose cost is prohibitive for the average working woman, while the few government-provided centres have long waiting lists, and usually must be booked 1 or 2 years in advance. After-school care is an even more neglected area. Currently, of

* Kathleen Fitzpatrick, 1958, quoted in Summers, A. Damned Whores and God's Police. The Colonization of Women in Australia, 1975. Penguin Books.

women who have children under 12 years, 42.5% are working (compared with 29% in 1969). For these women, the provision of adequate child-care is of utmost urgency. However, the attitudes of government policy-makers lag somewhat behind the reality of the situation, and child care in practice is of rather lower priority than, for example, the provision of car-parking in the city area. While child-care facilities remain inadequate, many women who would otherwise return to education or work will be prevented from doing so.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Governments and Education

Under Australia's Federal Constitution, the States retain the responsibility for primary (to year 6), secondary high and technical (to year 11 or 12), and for technical and further education (year 11 onwards), while responsibility for tertiary education is shared between the Federal and State governments. The major government initiative for non-formal education comes from the TAFE (Technical And Further Education) sector in all states and in some states from boards or councils of adult education. However, the schools, colleges and tertiary institutions (universities, institutes and colleges of advanced education) may also provide some non-formal adult education.

A large proportion of non-formal adult education in Australia has been initiated and carried out by community and voluntary organizations or groups, and by authorities outside the education system. Some of these groups have "learning" per se as a specific objective, such as the phenomena of the Neighbourhood Learning Centres found mainly in the State of Victoria, and others are concerned with learning about a specific area of community need, for example the Anti-Cancer Foundation's programs. Many of these groups are eligible for small allocations of programatic funding through both state and federal funding mechanisms.

Philosophical background to Special Programs for Women

The vastness of the Australian continent together with a general commitment to providing equal services to citizens no matter how remote their location could be seen to be a key factor in the legacy of central planning and sameness of provision in formal education. The Australian ethos of the 1778 immigrants and their descendants has also been described as having a commitment to "equality" derived from pioneering origins. Only in the last two decades has state centralism in education started to give way to some regional autonomy and to the granting of greater powers to individual schools or other educational communities. In the sixties and early seventies there was an upsurge of social movements claiming the rights of individuals, neighbourhoods and other

community groups to greater participation in both the decision-making processes and provision of services. As elsewhere in the world, there was a focus on ways and means of ensuring that our society is truly egalitarian. Thus the rights of the less privileged have come to the forefront and attending these moves many more "self-help" or voluntary groups have emerged saying clearly what their needs are, and often initiating what are non-formal education programs. These programs are often both for personal development of their members and to publicise their cause in society generally.

The formal system has responded to these recent social movements and at both State and Federal policy level we find the concept of "equal opportunity for disadvantaged people" and "participation in decision making". The concept of what is called "access education" became accepted and formalized with the tabling in 1974 of a Federal report known as the Kangan report. The central provision of the report was unrestricted access to post-school education through government maintained or administered institutions not already assisted through the Australian Universities Commission or the Australian Commission on Advanced Education.

The major theme of Kangan may be described as encouraging the removal of barriers to entry into technical and further education for all adults. Access education in Australia has developed in a positive manner despite the lack of a clear government definition of "Access". Confusion over what is meant by recurrent education, access education and further education has contributed to this lack of a clear guideline for TAFE*. Despite this lack of definition and philosophical clarity, access education in its varying forms is more revolutionary in its development compared to the technical side of TAFE.

Women have been active in many of these social movements and their resultant groups and organizations. The women's movement in Australia is, as elsewhere, broad in its principles and philosophy. However, there has been a recurrent and forceful theme in its ideology towards developing structures different to prevailing societal ones and an emphasis on the importance of process or method rather than structure.

In non-formal education a major and perhaps unique phenomenon which developed in Victoria in the early '70s and is now spreading to other states was that of Neighbourhood Learning Centres, sometimes known as women's learning centres or community houses. The centres have in common that they have identified, or are responding to the isolation of those who are the day-time occupants of suburbia in Australia. Their membership has been primarily women. They range philosophically from providers of care, nurturance and learning activities for suburban dwellers to groups seeking philosophical and practical solutions to counter-balance the effects of increasing technology and

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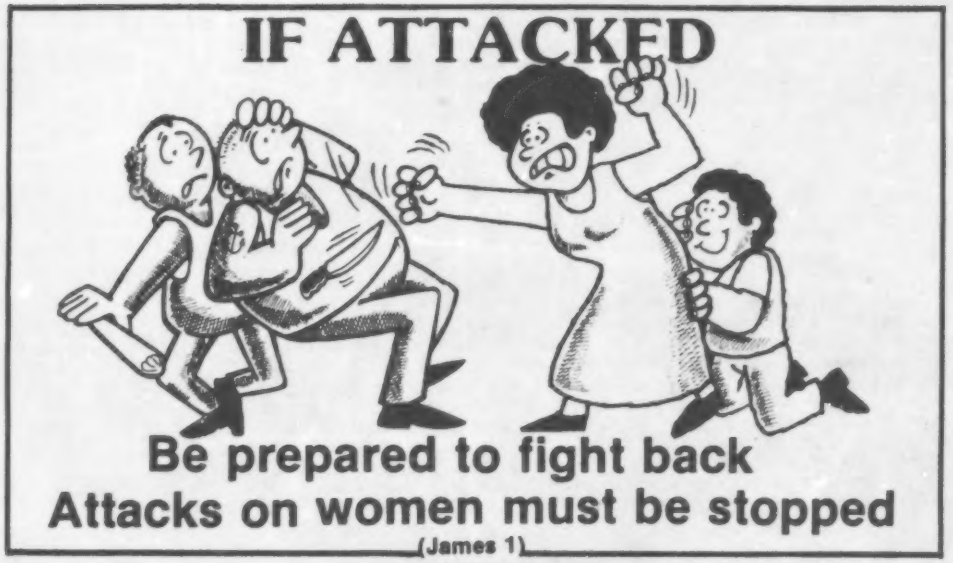
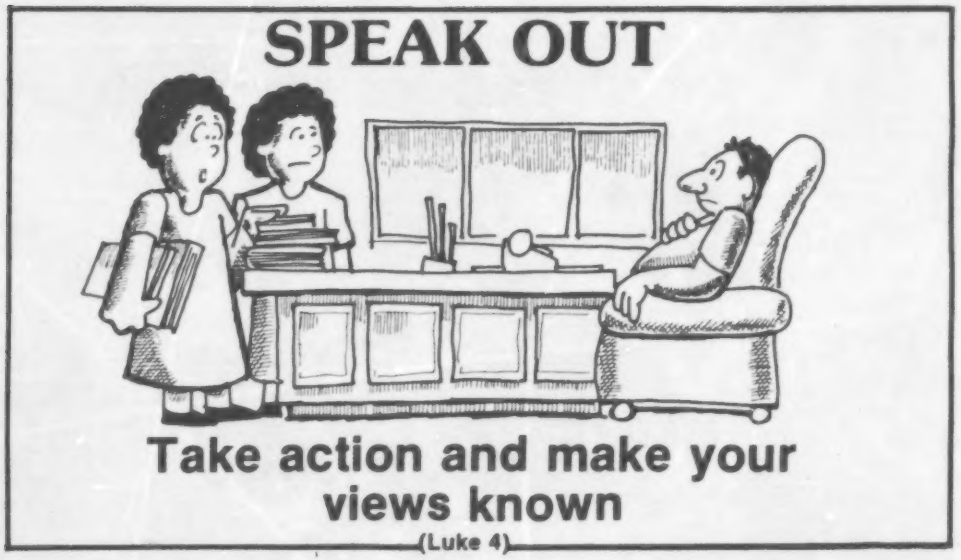
* Technical And Further Education (TAFE)

materialism in our society. The scope of programs in many of these centres brings together health, welfare and both formal and non-formal education, all of which are often subsumed under a philosophical motto such as "Learning, Caring, Sharing". Thus, it is in these centres that a sense of development both for individual people and, on the macro-scale, of Australian society's and world development needs, is recognized and often practised.





These are taken from the Ofis Blong Ol Meri/World YWCA, Box 832, Nadi, Fiji, 1984 Calendar. The title of which is "Better Communities in 1984"

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN IN MALAYSIA

Norijah bin Mohd Noor
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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia, I am proud to say, is undoubtedly one of the more prosperous members of the Third World. We are the world's leading producer and exporter of rubber, tin, palm oil and tropical hardwoods. Although mainly a primary-producing country, we are rapidly industrialising and standards of living are fairly high judged by the criteria of developing nations.

The Malaysian economy took an upward turn in the 1980s, enjoying a steady growth. This gave the women a good start for the country enjoyed increased development which resulted in more job opportunities. Women's participation in the employment sector increased every year and to date, women can be found in every field, including engineering, medicine, agriculture, science, accountancy and public administration.

Malaysia is multi-racial and this had a very important bearing on all our policies and programmes. The following statistics will give a clearer idea of the ethnic composition of our country:

Malays:	5,727,492	- 55%
Chinese:	3,720,092	- 34%
Indians:	1,107,269	- 10%

Other minority races made up less than 1 per cent.

Women in the Population

The 1978 population of Malaysia was estimated as follows:

Males	5,280,667
Females	5,229,438
Total	10,510,105

The most important aspect of our population structure is the relatively large proportion of young people. About 60 percent of the population is below the age of 21.

On the working population, the statistics are:

Males	1,958,288
Females	912,661
Total	2,870,949

Women are found particularly in the following field of employment:

Agriculture	504,000
Manufacturing	73,000
Services	140,000
Commerce	49,000

The services sector is fast expanding and so is commerce. Banks, insurance companies, shops, airlines and advertising firms have been able to provide much employment for women. Eventually there will be a smaller population in agriculture.

Non-formal education is in high demand for office skills, computer science, language proficiency and the like, as they are not always available in formal education.

Owing to the manifold opportunities available in factories and offices, certain occupations become unpopular with women. The best example is that relating to domestic servants. Up to about 20 years ago, there was no 'servant problem' in that it was possible to obtain girls to work as 'stay-in-servants'. Today that is practically impossible. At most there are some girls who are willing to work as part-time servants. Work in factories is preferred because of greater socialisation, and freedom after fixed working hours.

Malaysia has three levels of education - primary, which provides free education for six years from the age of seven - secondary and university level. For a total population of about 13 million, about 4 million of whom are school going children, the country has about 6,000 primary schools, 1,000 secondary schools and a number of higher institutes of learning, which includes five universities.

With adequate educational facilities and no discrimination in education between boys and girls, the literacy rate of the population is about 99 percent. As such, Malaysian women are fully able to take advantage of all job opportunities offered them at various levels.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the route to women's progress has been through education, formal and non-formal. There was a time when all girls, whether Malay, Chinese or Indian, were married off at 16 or even earlier. Their schooling was not regarded as vital. Today all girls are sent to school. Although we have a drop-out problem - and more girls than boys drop out of school - the number of girls proceeding to secondary, tertiary and higher education is greater than in the past. In the faculties of some universities female students outnumber male students. About 25 years ago there were only two female for every 10 male students.

with better educational qualifications, young women have been able to aspire and obtain employment in what were traditionally 'male preserves'. There are women working as engineers, lawyers, doctors, accountants, media personnel and university professors.

Since our independence 25 years ago, advances in science and technology have had an important effect on the lives of Malaysian women. Traditionally the Asian woman was overworked. Apart from giving birth to at least half-a-dozen or more children in her lifetime, she had to cook, keep the house clean, fetch water from the well and very often look after elderly relatives too. Today, that life of drudgery is fast disappearing. Thanks to so many gadgets that are available, life is not so burdensome. The middle-class housewife probably has a thermostat kettle, refrigerator, rice cooker and toaster in her kitchen. If she can afford it, a washing machine and a food-blender too can help lighten her burden. This I must emphasise is a relatively recent trend and it is increasing.

Family Planning

An increasingly enlightened attitude to family planning is a major factor in improving the social condition of the womenfolk of Malaysia. I would like to point out that the influence of one ethnic group's values on another is quite inevitable in a multi-racial society. Generally the Chinese have been noted for a greater readiness to accept modern ideas and more especially such highly sensitive notions like birth control. The Malay and Indian women are traditionally rather more conservative.

Apart from the dynamic work of the Family Planning Association, ideas on the values of planned parenthood have been spread as well as by example. It is interesting to note that in the middle and the working class families, two or at most three children is the norm.

Politics

Political consciousness too must be mentioned as a factor in the advancement of women. Every major political party has a women's section and also a youth section in which girls also participate.

Women's participation in politics has also increased over the years, especially among the Malays. Out of 650,000 members of the United Malay National Organisation, a political party, 65 percent are women.

Presently there are two women cabinet ministers (the Minister of Welfare Services and the Minister of Public Enterprise) and three deputy-ministers (in the Minstry of Information, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Ministry of

Culture, Youth and Sports). Out of a total number of 154 elected political leaders, eight are women.

Parenthood education

Regarding education for parenthood, there are now a number of organisations that are doing good work in the field. The Christian churches and Islamic societies carry out special guidance classes for young couples who are planning to get married. The subjects covered include: home finances, legal aspects of marriage, conjugal relations and the spiritual dimension in family and marriage.

This aspect of non-formal education is well received in Malaysia today but it has to be expanded and improved.

Due to the high literacy rate in the country, non-formal education is the primary concern of the print media consisting of newspapers and magazines. And because of the prominent representation of women in the government, the radio and television network, owned by the government, is also geared towards non-formal education interspersed with entertainment programmes.

There are 57 newspapers to cater to the readership requirements of the major races which make up the people of Malaysia - the Malays, Chinese and Indians. The circulation of daily papers is well above 100,000 while the circulation of Sunday papers is at above 200,000. The papers are published in English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil languages.

A monthly magazine printed in the Malay language has a 100,000 circulation while the only Chinese language magazine for women enjoys a slightly lower circulation.

It is interesting to note that every single newspaper contains a special section for women - and not just to cover cooking or fashion. Special articles and features are published on health, women's successes in all fields and on family life.

The magazines too go heavy on health and family matters, success stories and politics. There are no society gossip columns in locally printed magazines.

It can be said that the features and articles in the mass media are geared towards making women aware of and desire better working conditions, better family health and also better understanding of each other, a necessity in a multiracial country like Malaysia.

The electronic media too plays a big role in the effort to get women more aware of what is going on in the country and outside. Other than special programmes for women, the entertainment programmes over radio will be interspersed with tips on good health and household economies. The mass media too play their role whenever any campaigns are needed for improvement of health, society etc.

Due to the active non-formal education carried out by the media in the past many years, Malaysian women came to realise the role that they have to play in the country's development. They are fast becoming aware of their rights in employment and in society and have got together to demand these rights.

Many women are joining labour unions and women-only organisations. Although discrimination against women is still obvious in certain instances, attitudes have been changing for the better. They have fought for and got equal pay, provided with adequate maternity leave and been granted separate income tax assessments from their husbands.

Women government officials going overseas on a year long study leave can demand to take their husbands along - when previously it was ruled that only men could take their wives along.

Consumer consciousness is another non-formal education issue which is "big news" in Malaysia. The first consumer association was founded in Kuala Lumpur in 1965 but now there is an association on a voluntary basis in almost every state. Most of the consumer organisations are primarily engrossed in the handling of complaints and giving talks to schools and other organisations.

Here again, almost every newspaper will have a consumer page and letters come from the public, mostly women, enquiring about their rights as consumers.

In addition, the consumer education programme on radio is making a big impact. It is not only the housewife but also the domestic servants who listen and act upon the information they have imbibed. Recently the introduction of the metric system was made somewhat easier because of the intensive mass education campaign carried out on the radio and to a lesser extent on television.

The electronic media, and more particularly the radio, represent the best way of reaching Malaysian women. In our rural areas, conservatism still prevails. Husbands and fathers may not be so willing to allow wives and grown up daughters to go out of the home to adult education centres far away using public transport. Evening and night classes would be 'taboo' in such situations. Therefore radio is ideal. Medium-wave coverage is very extensive.

Japanese transistor sets are very cheap and are to be found in even the poorest of homes. Even the cowherds carry a transistor radio when they take the cattle out for grazing!

I do not want to paint too rosy a picture of the position of women and of the benefit they derive from non-formal education. With the rapid population drift from country to town, new social problems have arisen. Girls from rural areas fall victim to all kinds of exploitation. Some may be cheated out of their money by unscrupulous 'boy-friends' or landlords and landladies. Others may be lured into immoral occupations. There is greater need for providing these people with suitable housing as well as educational and recreational facilities. Loneliness sometimes gives rise to mass hysteria and a search for excitement.

Conclusion

Malaysia, like many other nations is undergoing rapid changes. We have to be geared for even greater changes and face the challenges of the 1980s. Much reliance is being placed on non-formal education just as previously the emphasis was on formal education. We are doubtless more fortunate than many other nations and we will strive to do our own share to better the lot of our women.

COUNTRY REPORT OF JAPAN

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Women's Learning in Old Age

Japan occupies a very high place in the world regarding the longevity of her people. The average life-span of women is 79.13 years old, which is second highest in the world, and that of men is 73.79 years old, the first in the world. The longer life-span has consequently resulted in rapid increase in the advanced-age society.

One of the most important tasks of the advanced-age society is to provide opportunities for old people so that they can adjust themselves to their society and so that they can re-discover their own life values. Therefore it has become an urgent task for administration to give concrete shape to the plan.

The opportunities of the Advanced aged Groups Learning

The Social Education Council, which is a consultative Committee of the Minister of Education, submitted a report in 1971 on "new social education to cope with rapid changes of social structure". It was reported herein that aged people's learning should include the following ideas: that is, "old people should develop social abilities suitable for their age, they should live independently as long as they can, and they should try to eliminate the generation gap so that they can live worthwhile lives until the last day." The report suggests the following content of their learning:

Learning with regard to:-

(1) occupation training to prepare for re-employment.

(2) maintaining good health and hygiene.

(3) hobbies and culture so that old people can spend their spare time significantly.

(4) current topics for a better understanding of social changes.

(5) understanding the younger generation.

(6) making friends so that they can share their hobbies.

(7) education of their grandchildren and children of the neighbourhood community.

(8) various public services.

The Ministry of Education encouraged the opening of "Study Circles for the Aged" and has supported a part of the expenses since 1973. These study circles are held using social education facilities such as elementary schools or junior high schools. They are usually organized by village, town, or municipal educational committees. The content of learning is as follows: "understanding social changes", "understanding younger generations", "how to maintain good health", "fulfilment of hobbies and culture", "participation in public services", etc. "How to maintain good health", and "fulfilment of hobbies and culture" as most popular among them. Table 1 shows the number of classes of the study circles.

The learning similar to the above, such as, "classes for the advanced-age groups" or "universities for the aged" organized by public facilities or private corporations have recently been flourishing.

Number of Classes for Advanced Age Learners (1978)

Content of Learning	Number of Classes in Japan	the Percentage
Understanding Social Changes	2,329	58.3
Understanding Younger Generations	2,185	54.7
How to maintain Good Health	3,598	90.0
Hobbies and Culture	3,595	90.0
Public Services	1,334	33.4
Others	2,002	50.1

Table 1

Participation of the Advanced Age Group in Social Activities

Since 1978, the participation of the aged in social activities has been made possible through "the project of opening offices to the aged" promoted by the village, or town, or municipal, or prefectural educational committees. It is to make use of the knowledge, skills and experiences of the old people so that they may be of service to

society and of help for educating leaders of social education. The project also provides the necessary training so that they may become leaders of various social activities such as children's circles, youth circles, and women's circles.

The content of learning for leadership covers a wide range of fields, such as English conversation, a local history, business practice, gardening, handicraft, agriculture and forestry, and sports. The project is now beginning to take shape, and the Ministry of Education assists a part of its expenses.

An activity which has a comparatively large number of participants is "The Aged Folks' Club". It is a self-governed organization and is assisted financially by the Ministry of Public Welfare. The purpose of the club is "to promote the social welfare of the aged in home, community, and society". The chief activities are as follows: "cultural activities", "health promoting programs", "activities for enjoyment", "inter-communication with members of community", and others. In addition to the above, service activities have been taken up recently.

The Actual Conditions of Social Participation of the Aged

The research on "the social participation of the aged" made in 1978 shows the following results: caretaking of streets and shrines, 47.8%; gardening and sprinkling of insecticides, 32.5%; assisting ceremonies of marriage and funeral and Bon-dance, 20.7%; traffic safety campaign, disaster prevention campaign, 11.8%,etc. The activities are chiefly concerned with safety and management of community environment. There are not so many activities on culture and tradition (3.5%), such as circles for upbringing of children's or preservation of folk songs. The participation of women in these activities is generally lower than that of men.

On the other hand, the participation of the aged in the chores of the household shows a higher percentage of women than of men. This fact indicates Japanese society's tendency of divided role allotment, that is, men are supposed to work outside and women inside the house, regardless of age.

The ways they spend leisure hours are as follows: watching TV and listening to the radio came up to the top, 66.5%; next came reading and listening to music, 26.6%; gardening and handicraft, 16.3%; participation in the Aged Folks' Club, 12.7%; taking a walk and shopping, 12.3%.

Haiku-poetry and calligraphy (3.9%), flower arrangement and the game of go (3.8%), religious activities (3.2%), dancing and sports, (1.7%) show rather low participation.

Those who spend their spare time along are quite large in number, which comes up to 34.2%. 25.6% of them spend time with their family members or relatives; 19.7% with friends; 14.5% with members of the Aged Folks' Club. Generally speaking, many of them spend their spare time isolated and alone.

At a time when we are going to have a society of advanced age, the life style of the old people is not only a serious problem for them but also for the whole society of Japan. Moreover it is important not only for the old or for the prospective old people, but also for the younger generation. And the preparation and learning for one's old age should begin when one is still young from a long-range viewpoint.

Women's Learning for their Old Age

Generally speaking, women have a longer senescent period than men, and since according to statistics women have a longer span of life, the possibility of living alone without spouse at the last stage of life is quite high.

How to spend one's old age largely depends on the way that one has lived so far; in other words, it is affected by the whole process of one's life. Until the end of World War II, the life of women in Japan was generally confined in and protected by the family system. To play roles of wife, mother, daughter-in-law was the purpose of their life. Since the war, however, women have been set free from the family system; they have been guaranteed equality with men, and they have been respected as individuals. Yet, it has not been easy for women to continue to live on tneir own, and especially it is difficult in old age. It may be said that the problems of old age are simultaneously the problems of women.

The fundamental need of women's learning is independence, mental, economic, and social. To achieve this goal, the first thing to be taught is equality between men and women. At the same time, adult education should cover not only "learning as regards family life" but also "learning as regards civic consciousness", and "learning as regards knowledge and skills required for occupation".

"Learning of self-fulfilment" is especially important so that the old people can freely develop their abilities and be able to spend their spare time contentedly. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to provide learning to enable them to cultivate better human relationships and to enable them to accept various forms of life from a wider and more flexible life-view.

Women's Participation in Decision-Making

The time when Japanese women first exercised suffrage was April 10, 1946, when Japan held the 22nd general election for members of the House of Representatives. Thirty-nine women were elected on

this occasion, and the percentage of women who used their voting power was 67%, lower than that of men, which was 78.5%. The voting rate of women gradually improved, and at the election of members of the House of Representatives in June, 1980, the voting rate was 75.8% for women, which was higher than that of men, 73.7%.

In 1948, the first woman parliamentary vice-minister was appointed. Since then more than twenty Dietwomen have been appointed as parliamentary vice-ministers in various sections. In 1960, a woman Minister of Public Welfare was appointed, and in 1962, a woman head of the Scientific and Technical Administration Committee and two women Cabinet members were appointed. At present, however, we have only one woman parliamentary vice-minister, on the Science and Technical Administration Committee.

At present, (1981, Nov.), there are 754 Diet members (the House of Representatives, 506; the House of Councillors, 248). Among them, women members are 25 (9 in the House of Representatives; 16 in the House of Councillors). The percentage of Dietwomen is only 3.3% (in the House of Representatives, 1.8%; in the House of Councillors, 6.5%). The percentage of women members are slightly increased for the House of Councillors but decreased for the House of Representatives, as compared with those of 1950. As a whole, there is no improvement as regards women's participation in the Diet even after International Women's Year.

The same tendency can be observed among the members of the local assembly: the number of prefectural assembly-women is 34(1.2%) among the total number of 2,833; the number of municipal assembly-women is 441 (2.4%) among 20,080; the number of town and village assembly-women is 274 (0.6%) among 47,221.

As for the national public personnel, the types of work for which women cannot apply has decreased since International Women's Year. There is only one type of work which still prevents women's participation. On the other hand, the Aeronautical Aids University, the Maritime Safety University, and the University of Meteorology have all opened their gates to women students, and thus opened a way for women to become aviation control personnel and there are women national tax specialists. Recently, a woman superintendent of a revenue office was appointed for the first time in Japan.

Women's participation as international representatives has been slightly increased since International Women's Year. At present, the Japanese Ambassador to Denmark and one Japanese representative at the United Nations are women.

In general, however, the number of working women in administrative offices (above the 2nd grade) is very small. Many of them are in the lower rank below the fifth grade.

Even in elementary schools, where the total number of teachers exceeds that of men, the number of women principals is only 510 (2.2%), whereas there are 23,055 men principals. In junior high schools, there are 19 (0.2%) women principals and 9,705 men principals; in senior high schools, 128 (2.7%) women principals while men are 4,702; in junior colleges 55 (15.1%) women presidents while 310 men are presidents; in universities 19 (4.3%) women presidents while there are 419 male presidents.

In judicial administration, as of 1981, there are only 77 (2.8%) women judges among a total 2,761, and 28 (1.3%) women public prosecutors among 2,144.

In the various fields of councils on national administration, the rate of women committee members have almost doubled in the past five years, that is, from 2.4% (1975 Jan.) to 4.3% (1981 June), yet, it is still below 10%. The councils in which women members participate are approximately half (49.8%) of total councils, which means the rest consist only of male members.

Tasks of Women's Education

The government has set up "Headquarters for Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women" with the Prime Minister as head, in September 1975, and has planned all-round and effective projects based on "International Plan of Action" adopted at the World Conference of International Women's Year.

In 1977, the Headquarters issued "National Plan of Action" and made clear the aims and tasks of women's problems for the coming ten years. The main themes of National Plan of Action are as follows: "improvement of women's status from the viewpoint of law", "respect of motherhood and protection of health", "security of life in old age", "Promotion of international cooperation", etc. Among them, "promotion of women's participation in governmental decision-making" is emphasized.

The reality, however, is not quite satisfactory, even at present when half of the ten-year project of International Women's Year has passed.

One of the reasons for this unsatisfactory status lies in the traditional Japanese frame of concept, that is, men are supposed to work outside the home and women inside. This concept is still quite persistent and has restricted the activities of many women. As a result, women themselves had a tendency to depend on men

and to evade confronting the public and other situations of responsibility. Furthermore, women have not been given enough opportunities and experiences to train themselves socially, and consequently they lack social abilities and confidence.

The first attempt to promote women to decision-making professions is in eliminating various obstacles. And at the same time, women themselves should be conscious of the responsibilities and roles as members of society, and they should make a positive effort so that they can make good use of their abilities.

In future women's education, we should provide opportunities to cultivate their abilities and ways of training so that women can achieve self-fulfilment as individuals.

Another problem is the one-sided choice of major made by women students. 80% of them are junior college students, and their major fields are mostly Home Economics, Education or Literature. In colleges or universities, most women students major in Literature, Education, or Social Studies. This is one of the reasons women's work is confined to a certain field of work.

Adult education of women should be conducted not only within the framework of adult education, but also it should be conducted at home and at school, regardless of sex. Education of women should be achieved based on the interest, concern, personalities and abilities of individual women and it should be considered as an integral part of lifelong education.

THAILAND: COUNTRY REPORT ON ASPECTS OF THAI WOMEN TODAY

Dr Kasama Varavarn
Ms Chanida Chanyapate

STATISTICS ON WOMEN

General

The most recent figures put the female percentage of the Thai population at 49.7%, i.e. 23.1 million out of a total of 46.6 million. Average life expectancy for women is 63.5 years and for men 57.6 years.

Education

Enrolment figures show a virtual equality between female and male enrolments in lower primary education (females constitute 48.1% of total enrolments), which gradually erodes through upper primary (46.0%) and lower secondary education (43.8%). In upper secondary education, girls are predominant in the teacher-training programme (56.1%) and academic (pre-university) stream (51.6%) and out-numbered in vocational education (40.6%), where they tend to be restricted to secretarial and fashion-related courses.

Women form 44.1% of the university population, a proportion that has been increasing over the years. The presence is particularly heavy in humanities (87.5%); is grossly proportionate in education (56.4%), natural sciences (50.3%), medicine (49.0%) and social sciences (48.0%); is low in agriculture (23.9%), fine arts (23.1%) and law (15.8%); and is virtually non-existent in engineering (1.6%).

The illiteracy figure for women (25.2%) is higher than that for men (11.7%). Female participation in literacy classes of the Department of Non-Formal Education is put at approximately 43% of all literacy students nationwide, but this figure is skewed by the high level of illiteracy in southern, largely Muslim provinces, which provide many male students, but few females, for religious reasons. If the figures for the 4 predominantly Muslim province are eliminated, female participation in literacy classes rises to 49%.

Employment

Statistics reveal limited employment prospects for women. There are approximately 6 male employers to every female employer; the

proportion for government employees is 2.5 men to 1 women; for private sector employees, 1.5 to 1; and for self-employed persons, 3 to 1. But for every male unpaid family worker, there are two women. In general the employment position for women is worse in rural areas, where 3 women out of every four are unpaid family workers.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN THAI SOCIETY

General Perspective

Perhaps members of our audience have noticed articles in the regional press over the past few years dealing with the position of women in Thai society. The topic is also judged newsworthy inside Thailand, a fact which demonstrates that women do not enjoy equality in all spheres of life but that the noteworthy presence of a token female keeps the topic close to the public consciousness. When the status of Thai women becomes a matter of regional concern, this is a clear indication that Thai women enjoy a different (and normally better) lot than their sisters in neighbouring countries.

Traditional Customs

While it is true that individual women can and do achieve respected positions in Thai society, the general pattern is one of male domination. There are many traditional practices that speak of a formalised contempt for women, which may be illustrated with one or two examples. In railway-sleeping cars, a man will often offer to exchange a lower (and more expensive) berth when he finds that a women has booked the upper berth, since it is regarded as demeaning for a man to be beneach a woman. Men will refuse to walk underneath a washing line that carries female underwear for the same reason. And the traditional marriage practice is for the groom to negotiate and pay a 'bride-price' to the bride's parents, a custom that seems to hark back to the days when a wife was legally part of the goods and chattels.

Examples of such institutionalised prejudice could be multiplied endlessly, but it is important to stress that for most Thais, these practices do not constitute discrimination. An outsider who proposes the idea that a Thai husband has to 'buy' his wife will be told that he is misunderstanding Thai society. Indeed, there is a hoary Thai adage that is often trotted out on this subject to the effect that women are the back legs of the elephant. This is sometimes proudly used by women to show their usefulness in a male-governed society.

Religion

The popular Thai understanding of Buddhism, the dominant religion, also discriminates against women. Only men can be ordained into the monkhood, the less numerous white-robed 'nuns' being in fact

only devout laywomen rather than members of the priesthood which lapsed through lack of adherents and cannot now be restarted.

Women in Marriage

Although marriage is now legally a partnership of equals, there is still a division of labour that works to the wife's disadvantage. The husband is expected to work outside the home to provide the wherewithal for life. The woman's role is therefore home and child care, but this is normally coupled with extra functions in an attempt to earn more income. In most households it is indeed the woman who controls the purse-strings, but this turns out to be more of a burden that a privilege and meands that the woman is responsible for stretching available resources as far as they will go. Ironically, on the few occasions when a family has surplus income, decision-making on financial matters becomes shared or passes to the husband.

Legal Status

Legal changes within the past decade have greatly improved the position of Thai women, especially married women, from one of patently second-class status to apparent equality with men. However, there still exist a number of discriminative practices (that often do not come to light until they are changed) and many women are still unaware of their legal rights.

Reasons for discrimination against women

The inferior status of women in the view of Thailand's religion, and until recently legal and administrative systems, is part of a general cultural ethos that has assumed the correctness of male domination. It would be idle to indulge in speculation about root causes, but perhaps mention should be made of two factors which contribute to the continuation of social inequality.

The first is that for many women their own status does not rank as a significant concern beside the difficulty of providing for their families. The concept of women's liberation is unknown outside a tiny educated elite.

Secondly, it is quite clear that Thai children are brought up in quite different ways according to their sex. While boys are encouraged to be aggressive and their demands are often quickly met, girls are trained from an early age to provide service to others and to suppress their own wishes. This stereotyping is enforced outside the home and, it has been claimed, within the education system.

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

The Contribution of Women

The high participation of Thai women in the workforce is remarkable. In 1978 women constituted 47% of the total workforce with approximately 68.8% of women aged 11 and over participating. This is in addition to women's work in the home which in other countries has been estimated as representing 25-40% of GNP.

Rural and Working-Class Women

In rural areas, 86% of women are engaged in agriculture. The great majority (3 women in 4) are employed as unpaid family workers. An agricultural survey discovered that women put in 1,644 hours in the field compared with men's 2,294. But women also work 2,250 hours in the home, where men do very little. Extremely few women can afford to restrict their activities to home and child care.

Even so, there appears to be some underemployment among rural women. 1978 figures record a 22% drop in female participation in agriculture during the slack season, with approximately 3 million women without gainful employment at this time. Even during peak employment periods, 35% of women were classified as "inadequately utilized" in terms of hours of work[6], income from work or nature of work.

In the absence of skills, qualifications and capital, the prospects for occupational advancement for these women remains bleak, especially when they are shackled by the needs of their families.

However the pressures of limited land and an increasing rural population have induced larger numbers of women, especially unmarried girls, to migrate to the cities, where they often find jobs in the service, manufacturing and commercial sectors. Although opportunities for employment and increased income are much greater than in rural areas, women face other problems. A survey of working conditions of female workers in 27 factories in Bangkok revealed the problems of job insecurity due to a preference by employers for young unattached girls; hiring practices based on daily wages below the legal minimum; poor and often hazardous working conditions; inadequate legal protection from exploitation; and lack of opportunities for career advancement to upgrade knowledge and skills. Large numbers of women who fail to find an acceptable job with an adequate income are lured into prostitution or related work.

Middle-class women

Professional women are being found in increasing numbers in the middle ranks of the civil service and private sector and in

medicine and teaching. Women of this class have the opportunity and qualifications for advancement and their progress is not seen as threatening male dominance but rather as in helping family prosperity.

But even here, income and opportunities for career advancement are more limited than for men. A study of ten vocational occupations in the private sector revealed that 'men tend to have higher salary than women regardless of the duration of employment since first job, the duration of job-training, time spent on non-formal education, socio-economic background and ethnicity'.

Middle and upper class women can also escape their domestic chores by employing a servant. But the price is the subjugation of another women, of course.

Upper-class women

Upper-class women would superficially appear to have the same qualifications as men, but were they to compete for their husband's high-ranking position, they would be threatening male upper-class domination of society. Such women therefore often find their energies and talents channeled into social or charitable work.

Women and Power

Discrimination against women in employment has the effect of largely excluding them from the major sources of political and economic power in the country. There have been women Cabinet Ministers (there are none at present and the last one was, predictably, in education) but never a women Prime Minister. There are no women serving as under-secretaries of state (the highest ranking civil service position) and a mere handful are directors-general. The armed forces, traditionally the strongest power grouping in Thai politics, prohibit women by law from advancing beyond the rank of colonel.

No political party has a women as leader or deputy leader and all trade union leaders at the national level are male.

There have been no female provincial governors, deputy governors or district officers and only recently did the Ministry of Interior change the regulations to allow women to take the qualifying examinations.

Women may stand for parliament and a handful of female MPs now serve. A similarly small number of women were also appointed to the senate. In August 1982 the rule barring women from being

elected as village headmen was rescinded and in September the first woman to stand was elected. Perhaps typically, this provoked a statement from a senior official of the Ministry of Interior stating his opinion that women were unsuitable for this position.

Future Action

The Fifth Social and Economic Development Plan contains specific provisions for improving the employment situation of women. These include:-

- provision of basic education and training in vocational skills to urban and rural women with respect to earning and employment opportunities.
- Promotion of women's groups and provision of support for the production and sale of goods produced by women's groups.
- Revision and enforcement of the Labour Law to improve the working conditions and status of women.
- Expansion and improvement of welfare services for women through joint co-operation of the government and private sector.

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Importance of the Problem

The health of women has been an issue of considerable concern to the government. Such concern is based primarily on the recognition that the health of women and their understanding of health and hygiene directly influence the health of children. Consequently, while there is a great deal of information on the status of maternal and childcare, information on other aspects of the health condition of women is much more limited.

Family Planning

Recognition of the need to promote family planning emerged in 1958 when a report by a World Bank Economic Team traced the link between population growth and economic development and called for measures to reduce rapid population growth. The report led to a widening interest in the area. A large amount of research was conducted primarily on the level of knowledge and status of contraceptive practices among women. Family planning information and services were integrated with maternal and child care services.

In 1970 a policy on population was proclaimed with the aim of reducing the population growth rate. Family planning services were made available throughout the country through integration

with the national health service. The growth rate has steadily decreased from 3.3% in 1970 to 2.5% in 1976 and 2.1% in 1981. In 1982 approximately 3.4 million people were estimated to be practicing family planning and it is projected that 1986 will see over 4 million acceptors, thereby achieving the gaol of a population growth rate of 1.5%.

It is significant that approximately 90% of all acceptors of contraceptives are women. This fact has led to the accusation that men, as the major proponents of the population policy, have deliberately chosen a strategy that places the burden on women. In reality, however, many more factors are involved. Available contraceptive devices are mostly developed for women. A popular misconception persists among men and women that male sterilization leads to sexual impotence. Most importantly, perhaps, men are not aware of or are not sufficiently concerned about the difficulties and hardships faced by women in child-bearing and child-rearing.

Abortion

In Thailand abortion is illegal except for a handful of special cases such as pregnancy resulting from rape. It is estimated that over 900,000 illegal abortions take place each year in Thailand. Complications develop in about a quarter of these cases and approximately 2.4% of illegal abortion cases have to be admitted to hospital.

Efforts have been made by doctors, social workers and women's groups to liberalize the law to allow abortion for broader medical and social reasons. A bill to this effect was introduced to parliament last year and defeated in the senate.

Pregnancy

In spite of the increasing availability of contraceptive services, the average Thai women of child-bearing age is still pregnant every 22 months, which is more frequent than the 28 months interval suggested by medical personnel. Only 35% of women receive medical check-ups during pregnancy. Approximately 65% or rural women deliver at home with the help of relatives and traditional midwives. Mortality related to pregnancy and puerperium is reported at 1 per thousand, with women in the 20-24 age group having the highest mortality rate.

A major contributing factor to these problems is the shortage of medical personnel in rural areas. The ratio of doctors to population is 1:1,200 in Bangkok but 1:17,000 in rural areas. Equally important is inadequate knowledge concerning health and nutrition.

Nutrition

Malnutrition is a major cause of ill health among the Thai population. It is estimated that approximately 81% of maternal mortality is linked to inadequate nutrition during pregnancy. Infants born in rural areas have an average body weight of 2.5 - 2.6 kg., significantly lower than the 3 kg. average of Bangkok infants. Over 36 million (53%) preschool children are found to suffer from calorie or protein malnutrition and nutritional anaemia. Poverty, misconceptions about food and inadequate knowledge of nutrition and food preparation are the main causes.

Occupational Hazards

There has been little research on the health problems of women in different occupational groups. Available data seem to indicate that female labourers run a greater health risk than males due to the differences in physiology. Female farmers often suffer from anaemia, back pains resulting from rice-planting and general debility from long hours of manual work. Women working in factories were also found to suffer from chemical poisoning, excessive work hours and inadequate health care.

Future Action

The following measures are being undertaken by the government:-

- Improvement of maternal and child health care services through the establishment of a health service centre in every district, the training of villagers as health volunteers, and the training of government and traditional health personnel.

- Improvement of child nutrition by implementing a nutrition surveillance project, providing supplementary food to pre-school children, offering free lunches to school children, and promoting the cultivation of highly nutritious foods.

- Dissemination of health information through health centres, organized women's groups, the mass media and personal contacts.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Present Situation

Traditionally knowledge and skills were passed on informally to the young. Boys learned to read and write from monks in the temples, and served as apprentices to local craftsmen and artisans. Girls were prepared for their role as wives and mothers through informal training in the home.

In 1871 the first modern school for boys was established, to be

followed six years later by the first boarding school for girls. During the early nineteenth century, several public and private schools and colleges were set up to provide general and vocational education for boys and girls. But on the whole opportunities for women to pursue formal education were limited to the well-to-do and those living in the capital city of Bangkok.

The first significant impetus for women's education came in 1921 with the Compulsory Education Act which required all Thai children regardless of sex to attend primary school at age seven. Over the next 50 years, increased access to school, changes in role expectations of women and the creation of jobs for women have resulted in marked increases in the enrolment of young girls in the formal school system.

By the 1970s, over 70% of all Thai women had access to primary education. Women account for nearly 50% of secondary school enrolments and nearly 45% of university students. Over 2,000 non-formal education projects were organized for out-of-school women in various areas related to literacy education, health, community development and income generation. In spite of the impressive progress in women's education several problems remain in need of special consideration.

Disparity between Men and Women

While the discrepancy between the educational attainments of men and women has become ever narrower, there continue to be sharp differences between women in rural and urban areas.

If qualitative measures of women's education were available, such differences would probably be even more pronounced. A study on the equality of educational opportunities conducted by the National Educations Commission in 1975 found, for example, disparities in terms of school facilities, qualifications of teachers, student-teacher ratios, investment in education, progression and wastage rates and academic performance of students between and within regions of the country. Provinces in the North-east were found to suffer most in terms of investment, quality of education, educational opportunities and achievement of students.

Disparities among Women of different age groups

The improvement in educational opportunities for women over past years has created disparities in educational attainment among women of different age groups. The percentage of women in the 11-24 age group with no education, for example, is 4.8%, compared to 13.0% among women aged 25-44 and 54.6% among women aged 45 and over. Since women in the older age groups continue to play an active role in the labour force, the family and the home, this situation can lead to problems such as inadequate training for jobs,

limited opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills for self- and family-improvement and friction between mothers and their better-educated children.

Future Action

In order to alleviate some of these problems, the government has planned to undertake the following measures:-

- Expansion of formal education to reach 35.4% of pre-school children, 97% of children of primary school age, and 48% of children of secondary school age.
- Expansion of non-formal education emphasising functional and vocational education to reach 90% of women of all ages via the mass media.
- Improvement of educational facilities, quality of teachers and quality of learning materials to provide access to quality education to women in rural areas.
- Revision of curricula to develop recognition of the role of women in society and the attitudes for the necessary attainment of such roles.
- Integration of the content of educational programmes related to rights and responsibilities, leadership, community action and morals.
- Support for private organisations as centres for the dissemination of religion, art and culture.

A GENERALISED PICTURE OF A THAI WOMAN'S LIFE

A Thai girl, like her brother, is almost certain to enter Primary education. Her chance of dropping out, however, is slightly higher, and grows with time. If she gets to secondary school, she will most likely be in the academic (pre-university) or teacher training streams.

She is slightly less likely to get into university than her male peers, but once there, the chances are that she will study humanities, education, natural sciences, medicine or social sciences.

At whatever point a girl leaves the education system, she will stay at her parents' home until she gets the virtually certain job of housewife at her husband's home, normally between the ages of 20-24.

Rural women are 30% more likely than men to move into the city in search of employment. Some estimates claim that one young women

out of every fifteen will end up in prostitution of one kind or another.

Finally, she will probably live to see the death of her husband.

BELOW SOME OF THE MAJOR PRIVATE AGENCIES INVOLVED IN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

The National Council of
Social Welfare,
Mahidol Building,
Rajwiti Road,
Bangkok

The Girl Guides Association
of Thailand,
Phya Thai Road,
Bangkok

The Business and Professional
Women's Association of
Thailand,
139/4 Kesorn Road,
Rajprasong,
Bangkok

The National Council of Women
of Thailand,
(affiliated to the International
Council of Women)
Baan Manangkasila,
Lan Luang Road,
Bangkok

PACIFIC WOMEN'S RESOURCE BUREAU

Inter-Agency Meeting for Women's Programmes

A working group meeting of aid organisations, operating in the Pacific, was held at the SPC Community Education Training Centre in Suva, Fiji, from 28 to 29 March 1983. The objective of this inter-agency meeting was to secure greater co-operation and co-ordination between national, regional and international agencies in women's programmes, particularly in respect of training programmes, projects and project assistance.

The meeting was chaired by Miss Hilda Lini, SPC's Women's Programmes Development Officer (English), who was assisted by five resource persons, Ms Rose Kekedo of Papua New Guinea, Mrs Noumea Simi of Western Samoa, Ms Claire Slatter of Fiji, Mrs Grace Milissa of Vanuatu, and Mrs Esiteri Kamikamica of Fiji. The South Pacific Commission was represented by Mr W.T. Brown, Director of Programmes, Miss Mee Kwain Sue, Principal of the Community Education Training Centre, Ms Pari Mohammadi, ESCAP Consultant, and Mrs Beccalossi, Women's Programmes Development Officer (French).

Agencies represented at this meeting included: ADAB (Austrlian Development Assistance Bureau), Asia Foundation, Commonwealth Secretariat, ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), FPSP (Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific), ILO (International Labour Organization), Soroptimist International, UNDAT (United Nations Development Advisory Team), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), USP (University of the South Pacific), and WHO (World Health Organization).

After considering the objectives of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau, and its co-ordinating role, the meeting agreed that the Bureau should undertake this co-ordinating role in the form of promoting and facilitating co-operation among agencies and countries, and recommended that the Bureau's staff include a full-time communications specialist to ensure efficient implementation of the co-ordinating function, in the fields of:

(a) procedure and forms of communication and information exchange;

(b) collaboration in project planning, co-ordination, implementation and evaluation;

(c) utilisation of local resources and skills;

(d) promotion of self-reliance and management.

Noting the Twenty-first South Pacific Conference endorsement of the Pacific Women's Seminar recommendation 'that an independent evaluation committee be nominated by the South Pacific Conferenc to evaluate the activities (of the Bureau) annually, the meeting considered means by which this evaluation could be best achieved such as the establishment of an Expert Committee from the representatives at the Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting to meet during the Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting and to review and guide activities related to women.

The meeting also recommended that a meeting for Pacific women be held, and that ESCAP and SPC act in partnership in preparing for and holding this meeting. The recommendations of the meeting will be circulated and submitted for consideration by the SPC Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting to be held in May 1983, in Noumea, New Caledonia, and by the other participating agencies and organisations.

Community Workers Training Course

The third in-country training course of the Bureau's project on Strengthening the Planning and Implementation of Women's Programmes was held in Kiribati from 7 to 25 March and inaugurated by the First Lady of Kiribati, Mrs Tabai. It was successfully completed in collaboration with the Kiribati Women's Federation.

The course has been formulated to respond to the needs of community workers from the Minister of Home Affairs, the Kiribati Women's Federation (AMAK), and Church Women's Associations, all of whom were represented among the 37 participants.

The course set several precedents: it was the first time that field workers of many diverse and often conflicting women's associations had come together to share thir knowledge, experience and problems. It was also the first real opportunity for the Kiribati Women's Federation to gain understanding and acceptance of its role as a national organisation for all women.

Throughout the course, the similarity of roles and expectations from community workers representing different groups was stressed. The result was a gradual feeling of solidarity among the women. Living, working and learning together under AMAK's spacious *Maneaba* (Meeting House) undoubtedly helped to cement the professional bonds between women.

During the course, special emphasis was placed on:

(1) The role of a community worker vis-à-vis women's groups;

(2) Involving women in the identification of needs and problems, decision-making and problem solving, as well as planning of community development activities;

(3) Generation and use of local resources for development;

(4) Awareness and utilisation of services and expertise available in the country.

The course was organised and conducted by Ms Pari Mohammadi, ESCAP consultant, with the help of Kiribati women. The newly appointed Women Development Officer of Tuvalu and a member of the Tuvalu National Council of Women also attended this in-country training course.

Appointment of a Francophone Women's Programme Development Officer

Mme Marie-Clair Beccalossi joined the SPC Pacific Women's Resource Bureau on 10 March 1983 as the Francophone Women's Programmes Development Officer.

Mme Beccalossi, a Pacific Islander, was born in Kouaoua, New Caledonia, and is married, with three children.

The recently established Pacific Women's Resource Bureau was endorsed by the Twenty-first South Pacific Conference held in October 1981, in Vanuatu, and was set up at the South Pacific Commission's headquarters in June 1982. As Francophone Officer in this regional women's programme, Mme Beccalossi is responsible for meeting the individual needs of the francophone countries of the SPC area. She has extensive experience in the field of youth and women's development, as well as in rural and community aid programmes. A former trainee of the Rural Family Houses

and leader of the Christian Agriculture Association in New Caledonia, she was also the editor of a quarterly newsletter which co-ordinated the activities of the association, and was liaison officer for regional and international agencies. As member of the International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth (MIJARC) she also attended meetings on related subjects throughout the world.

"NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER: WHAT DOES DEVELOPMENT REALLY MEAN TO WOMEN?" *

Lucille M. Mair

It is for me a pleasure and a real privilege to have been invited to participate in this Women's Congress, and I should like to express my appreciation to the Global Community Network for their invitation and also my congratulations for their having undertaken this important initiative. The presence of so many concerned and committed women here this weekend bears witness to the extent that the concerns of this Congress are shared in California. It is also evidence of your interest in the work of the United Nations - especially its work for women, symbolized and carried forward by the World Conference which took place in Copenhagen in July, and also its work on re-structuring the world economic system as symbolized, and regrettably most inadequately advanced, in the recent eleventh Special Session of the General Assembly. It is an expression of faith that your organizers have chosen to give a central place in the agenda of this meeting to the Mid-Decade Conference because of the way in which sections of the media described that Conference is a symptom or a microcosm of the way in which much of the media, in this country and others, has portrayed the United Nations itself, and the critical issues with which it deals. Your public cannot escape being conditioned by this portrayal. If you add to this disability the further disability of the way in which the media customarily portrays women, their cares and their concerns, you recognize that what we face - and what I, as a woman working in a particular place at a particular time, am deeply committed to doing - is the need to cure a double blindness.

It is critically important, I believe, to understand the way in which these two blindnesses are linked, because in both cases -- the work of the United Nations in international economic restructuring and the situation of women -- our ability to see the reality behind the image in one case will enhance our understanding of the reality of the other; progress made in one cause can only help to advance progress in the other.

In both cases, the issue is control, and the controversy is about the sharing of power -- between women and men, between nations. In the United Nations the demand for more equitable sharing of power, most urgently embodied in the demand for a new international economic order, is not merely an assertion of the right to speak on behalf of the eight hundred million people who live below the poverty level (the majority of whom, incidentally, are women), and whose situation for the most

* Address delivered to the Women's Congress, California State University, 4 October 1980. Lucille Mair is the Secretary-General for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women.

part is worsening. The demand is also, in the name of equity, for a say in those international institutions and policies which determine whether or not the majority of those eight hundred million people will have a fair chance of survival. What is asked in short, is whether there is the political will to make the Charter of the United Nations a reality.

The analogy with the issue of women is clear. There is no argument about the fact that women constitute half - statistically, perhaps slightly more than half -- of humanity. In the first five years of the United Nations Decade for Women, in the period between Mexico and Copenhagen, we have learned a great deal more than we knew in 1975 about that half. We have learned that women perform one-third of humanity's quantified work, and that increasingly this work is done not only in the household or on the family farm, but in the factories and the plantations which produce for vital exports; in the office which manage a nation's public and private business; in the hospitals and schools which provide a nation's social infrastructure. In Mexico, we sensed and stated the proposition that women are a factor which could sustain or change every existing system in the world's economic production or variety of political arrangements: it was perhaps scarcely more than an intuition then, but now that proposition is convincingly reinforced by statistical data which were not available five years ago; and that enhanced data base underlay the perceptibly greater confidence and sophistication of analysis which Copenhagen demonstrated.

The same data reveal -- in many ways and at many levels -- that women have remained relatively powerless. National statistics of productivity are still not totally clear as to the work women do even in the sectors governments consider important, and little if any attempt has been made to quantify how much these important sectors depend on the uncounted work women do at home. As a result, whether we are talking about the forward plan of an American corporation, which will affect the inhabitants of six American cities, or talking about a national development plan which will affect the inhabitants of an entire country, the tendency is either not to think of women in these contexts, or to think of them as a group to which any benefits will "trickle down". A world which has to face the facts that fully one-third of all its families are headed by women, the only identifiable source of economic support, has to question this thinking.

The same reputable source - the International Labour Organisation -- which provides the statistic that women perform one-third of the world's counted labour also estimates that women earn less than one-tenth of the world's income for it, and control

less than one-hundredth of the world's property. Speaking in a free market economy, there is perhaps no better definition of powerlessness. Those who have argued most forcibly for a change in economic relations between countries have cited the statistics that 70 per cent of the world's people get 30 per cent of the world's income; that, too, is a definition of pwerlessness. Both statistics are not only cause for shame, but signposts to what must be changed if we are really serious about the future we intend to leave to our children.

Five years ago, in Mexico City, when for the first time in history the Governments of the world met in conference to speak about the concerns and the potential of women, they agreed that there should be a Decade for women, and that its objectives should be Equality, Development and Peace. At the time it was said by cynics that this represented a compromise among the world's three major political groups: that the West, inspired by its feminists, held out for equality, that the developing world set its priority as development, and that the East settled for peace. The world of 1980 has become so much more complex that I do not believe that remark would be possible today: we certainly did not hear it in Copenhagen. In five years we understand more clearly that those three goals are important not just for women, but for human survival, and that all of them are interrelated. The Mid-Decade Conference's agenda, its deliberations and its conclusions made this clear, viz., equality for women is indivisible from development, and both are indivisible from peace. And this gives us some measure of the distance we have travelled on our way from Mexico to Copenhagen.

And this has a lot to do with our growing perceptions of the world of 1980, a disturbingly more complex world that that of 1975 when we decided that there should be a United Nations Decade for Women. In the area that we designate as "political" there are so many areas of insecurity, so many flash-points, so many more than were on our international agenda 1975, above all, so much more questioning of our assumptions about the way the world is ordered -- that each of us as an individual is being forced to rethink what may be reality, and what we can do to change it. In the matter of economics, the parallel global tension intensified by unprecedented recession, an energy crisis, and the mounting debt burdens of the developing nations has equally challenged everything we thought we knew about how our governments work to protect our hopes and our expectations. This is as true for countries whose names you may never have heard, as it is for you. And this wider, deeper awareness of where we and our world stand in 1980 gave an urgent, heightened dimension to our work in Copenhagen.

It determined the fact that we went to the Bella Center with Palestinian women, Southern African women, refugee women already inscribed, among other items, on our agenda: we left with additional mandates not only for rural women, elderly women, battered women, but for Bolivian women, Sahrawi women, women in poverty, and a significant ground-breaking mandate to implement the Decade's goals "within the framework of the United Nations efforts to achieve the New International Economic Order".

The much-misunderstood struggle in the United Nations for the New International Economic Order is too often represented as demands made by those who cannot "make it" against those who have "made it". Something analogous in this country to the situation where the working taxpayer resents the welfare recipient.

It is a dangerous analogy. It is dangerous because it is impossible to extrapolate from a local situation to the world, and it is dangerous because by refusing to look at what the actual costs would be, it dishonours a legitimate proposal which has been made -- with really very little rancour when one considers both the past and the present. It is not resentment which is involved, but survival, not to speak of justice. Behind the technicalities of the debate which still continues at the United Nations are issues that every women who has ever wanted to have some say in her own destiny will understand. In essence, the fundamental questions are, viz.: Can we now have access to a power structure -- international, national, domestic -- which dominates our lives, but which we had no share in devising? Will there be recognition and promotion of self-reliance? Will credit be available? Can the existing rules or laws or institutions be changed? Will there be structural reforms and changes? Can we devise new mechanisms and get a share in their control -- mechanisms which will not carry out vengeance on those who held absolute power before but will recognize the need and the desirability of working together for mutual benefit? How quickly can there be a real sharing of the skills, expertise, technology which alone can make equality have meaning? Can there be codes of conduct that are agreed? Can we, the powerless but productive, have it acknowledged that there is a cash value for what we produce, which we will be paid even if it causes inconvenience to those who pay? Will we be allowed to form networks through which we can co-operate, without it causing suspicion and retaliation? And so on.

The voices of women in their dialogue with men are scarcely distinguishable from the voices of the South, in its dialogue with the North. And there is a curious irony in the fact that so many women of the North, passionate and articulate

as they were in their presentation of the oppression of women, failed to make the intellectual? moral? leap across the worlds, to identify with the cause of the South in so many fundamental aspects.

What really happened at Copenhagen?

I would like to say what -- or some of what -- I saw happening there. In a world of political and economic insecurity, 145 countries from every geographical area and every political persuasion, came to meet. It was the second such meeting and I think that this -- and five years of experience in carrying out the decisions of Mexico City -- had added more than I can say to the expertise and the assurance of the women who came to Copenhagen. Because the information, the data-base, was better, we knew not just more about other women, but even about ourselves. We had had a chance to refine our priorities; we knew some of the things that were most needed, and women said them even when it was a matter of saying that their own governments had set up women's ministries, or women's bureaux, but had not given them adequate funds or had not given them a place on the organizational chart which would allow them to have a say in national decisions.

These things, even when they were said publicly and for the record, got no publicity. What got publicity was political discord; not that 284 paragraphs of a 287-paragraph programme of action for moving forward to guarantee women's rights were unanimous, or that 33 out of 48 resolutions were approved without a vote by 145 countries with hugely different points of view, or that the vast majority of all that was proposed was agreed...far more, I suspect, than in any recent international conference, even those on a single issue, let alone in a conference which began with the premise that no issue on earth was not a "women's" issue.

I believe that Copenhagen set one thing straight. I believe that never again will it be possible to think that women -- coming to confer together from all over the world -- can be strait jacketed into discussing only social policy, or that social policy can ever again be described as the "women's issue". Women came to Copenhagen with the absolute conviction that they were involved in politics, national and international.

They had learned at the level of their country experience -- in the years since Mexico City gave them the impetus (or gave it to their governments) to set up women's bureaux or commissions, or to enact laws -- that none of these initiatives could "deliver" without political power. They had also

learned that what happens to women, at least in our present imperfect world, is in large part a consequence of the economic situation of where those women live: that just as women in Detroit see their fate, their employment prospects, as linked to the fate of the auto industry, women in a developing country see their fate and their employment prospects as linked to a new international economic order, for the old "disorder" controlled by transnational corporations, had failed to meet their needs. They had also seen that women cannot be set aside from the historical forces which govern their lives: women in a revolutionary war must speak about revolution, and if there had been a world women's conference in 1776, the women of America would have been preoccupied with colonialism... and in 1812, most certainly with neo-colonialism. A liberation struggle had just ended victoriously in Zimbabwe when we met in Copenhagen and the presence of Mrs Mugabe and her delegation dramatized the drive towards independence and racial equality which still engages millions of men and women today: a military coup took place in this hemisphere during the first week of the Conference, and instantly added a new item to the Conference's concerns.

In Copenhagen we disagreed on many things -- though perhaps on fewer things than some media (or some governments) would have you believe. We had more hard facts to work on. We knew more about the progress of women in employment, in health, in education, in political participation; we knew more about how past conferences on specific issues like science and technology or primary health care, could skirt around the fact that women were not only beneficiaries but critical elements in changing the unsatisfactory present situation. We understood why governments could not totally agree on the troubled issue of refugees, nevertheless, we could still agree officially that women refugees had never been properly recognized as the majority of a category called "refugees", which was seen as an international crisis without being seen through the perspective of being female. We could still agree that the United Nations should give its attention in new ways to migrant women, and elderly women, and young women, and battered women and family violence, and we testified to our agreement in the resolutions which we adopted on these issues. We agreed that women should be given equal pay for work of equal value. We stated and restated that in all the current United Nations concerns -- from sanctions against South Africa to achieving of safe drinking water for the world, to the achievement of a New International Economic Order -- women should be consulted and not merely benefited. Beneath all these vital issues, we agreed that there are common roots of oppression of women which spring from attitudes, and will ultimately only be removed if attitudes are changed -- and that women are under a double burden because women are both productive and reproductive. But we also agreed that no amount of change within any country or

group of countries will liberate women unless the international system can change as well because we recognized -- without any dissent -- that women cannot be looked at in isolation from the world's requirement of equality, development and peace: we reaffirmed that global inequities are inextricably linked with domestic inequities; that international development strategies which do not work for women do not really work for anyone.

We moved, therefore, logically from Copenhagen to New York, to the Headquarters of the United Nations where less than a month after the end of the Mid-Decade Conference a grim debate ensued on the global economic power system, focusing on the adjustment of those structures which support the imbalances which exist between North and South, and which underlie the persistent poverty of the majority of the world's population. Its fundamental objective was to achieve an acceptable level of human development through the instrument of an international development stragegy appropriate to the Decade of the 80s. The priorities of Copenhagen, as expressed in one of its most important decisions (Resolution 47), synchronized with priorities of the special session in some of those key sectors on which national and international economic systems are constructed, and I quote from the statement which I made to that special session as I conveyed the relevant conclusions from Copenhagen, designed to place women alongside with men in the mainstream of international development processes:

> *"Studies undertaken throughout the United Nations system between 1975-1980 and elsewhere on women's socio-economic status have served to bring to light disguised and/or hidden national and international factors which adversely affect development. These factors are closely interrelated fundamental roots of underdevelopment, such as that of inadequate access of developing countries to science and technology, unfair trade policies and inequitable distribution of financial resources within and between countries. Some of these factors critically affect, and are affected by women's economic roles in the areas of agriculture, industry, trade, science and technology.*
>
> *It is possible today to understand even more clearly than before the interrelationships between key global economic factors, such as the international division of labour and the economic roles of women. Their status, too often one of inferiority and dependency, implying a vast reservoir of cheap, unskilled labour, is inextricably linked with a chain of economic relationships forged in the international market system: such relationships in agricultural production in industrial development, for example, have been either undervalued or ignored in the past, to the detriment of past development strategies."*

It is possible to say now, with a certainty which was not possible two weeks ago, that this will never happen again. Because of the great organizational, informational and conceptual strides which women the world over have made since 1975, because of the dynamic international interaction generated in these processes, further activated and consolidated in Copenhagen, women's analytical and political contribution to the world's developmental crisis has at last been recognized.

That special session of the General Assembly had two important mandates: one was to establish the procedures and agenda of the global negotiations to ensure movement towards global economic restructuring as of early 1981, and the other was to elaborate the third developmental strategy for the 1980s, the latter to a great extent dependent for its effectiveness on the progress of the former.

The session, with considerable difficulty, nevertheless completed its second mandate, adopted in draft form a developmental strategy, representing a kind of triumph for the international community, and unquestionably for the cause of women. This is expressed in three critical paragraphs of that draft -- in its sections on its preamble, its goal and objectives and its policy measures which now ensure explicitly and integrally the incorporation of women into future developmental strategies.

But let us not celebrate too soon, for the greatest challenge still lies ahead. That strategy, although now accepted by the whole membership of the United Nations, remains a paper strategy, with no substance, no meaning, or any possibility of implementation and impact, until the nations of the North and South can seriously get to grips with the global negotiations on the establishment of a new international economic order which can distribute global power in just and rational ways. The second mandate of the eleventh Special Session remains sadly unfulfilled: no progress has been made on determining finally the procedures and agenda of those negotiations. The fundamental obstacle lies in the absence of a political will on the North to carry that process forward. The implications for women are profound. A Congress such as this is strategically designed to understand these implications and to face the challenge which they impose as we enter the second half of the Decade, the last critical period of our Century.